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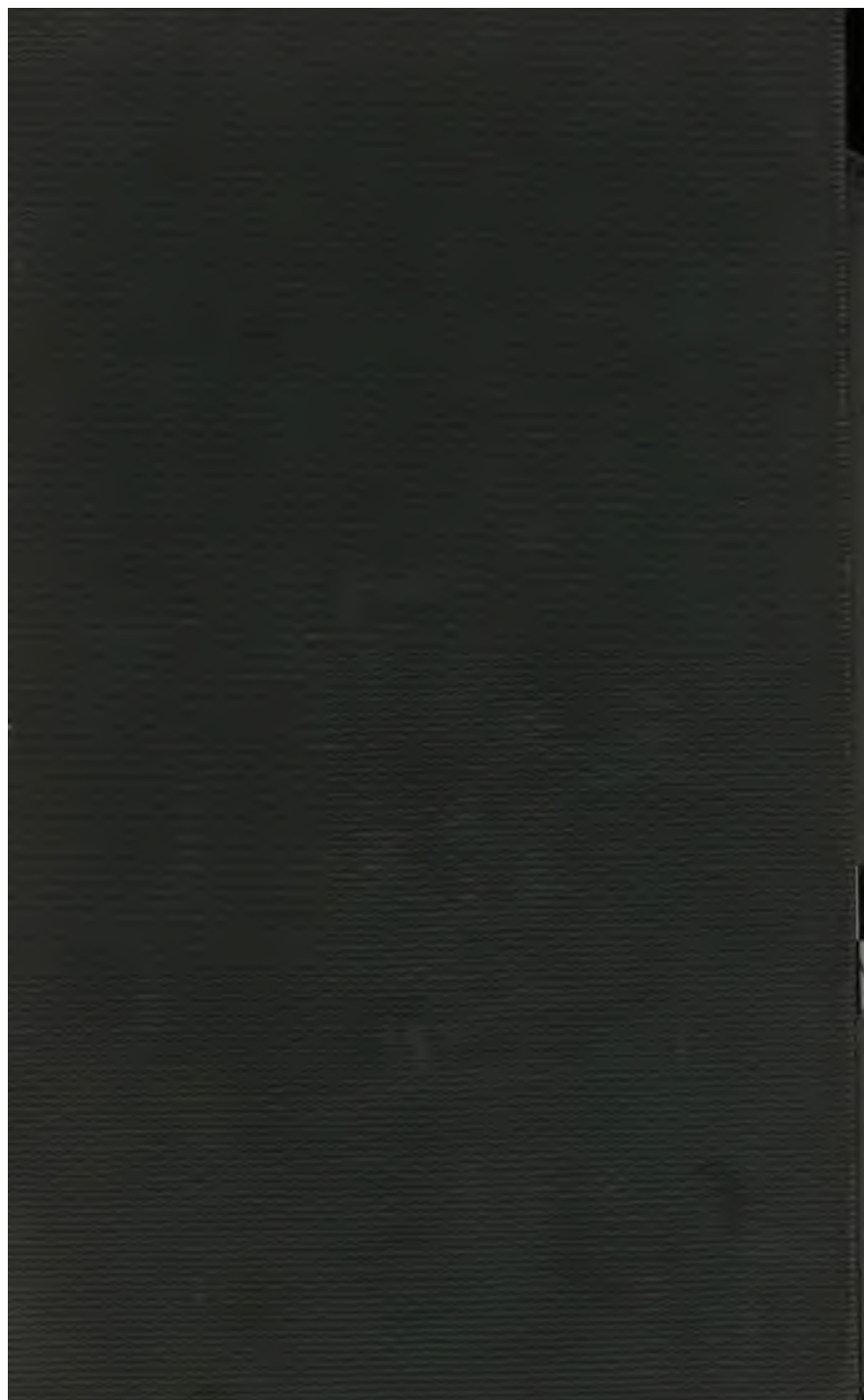
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INTRODUCTIONS
TO
THE STUDY
OF THE
~~GREEK CLASSIC~~ POETS.

Homer
DESIGNED PRINCIPALLY

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS AT
SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.

BY
HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE, ESQ. M.A.
LATE FELLOW OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

PART I.
CONTAINING--I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION.
II. HOMER.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
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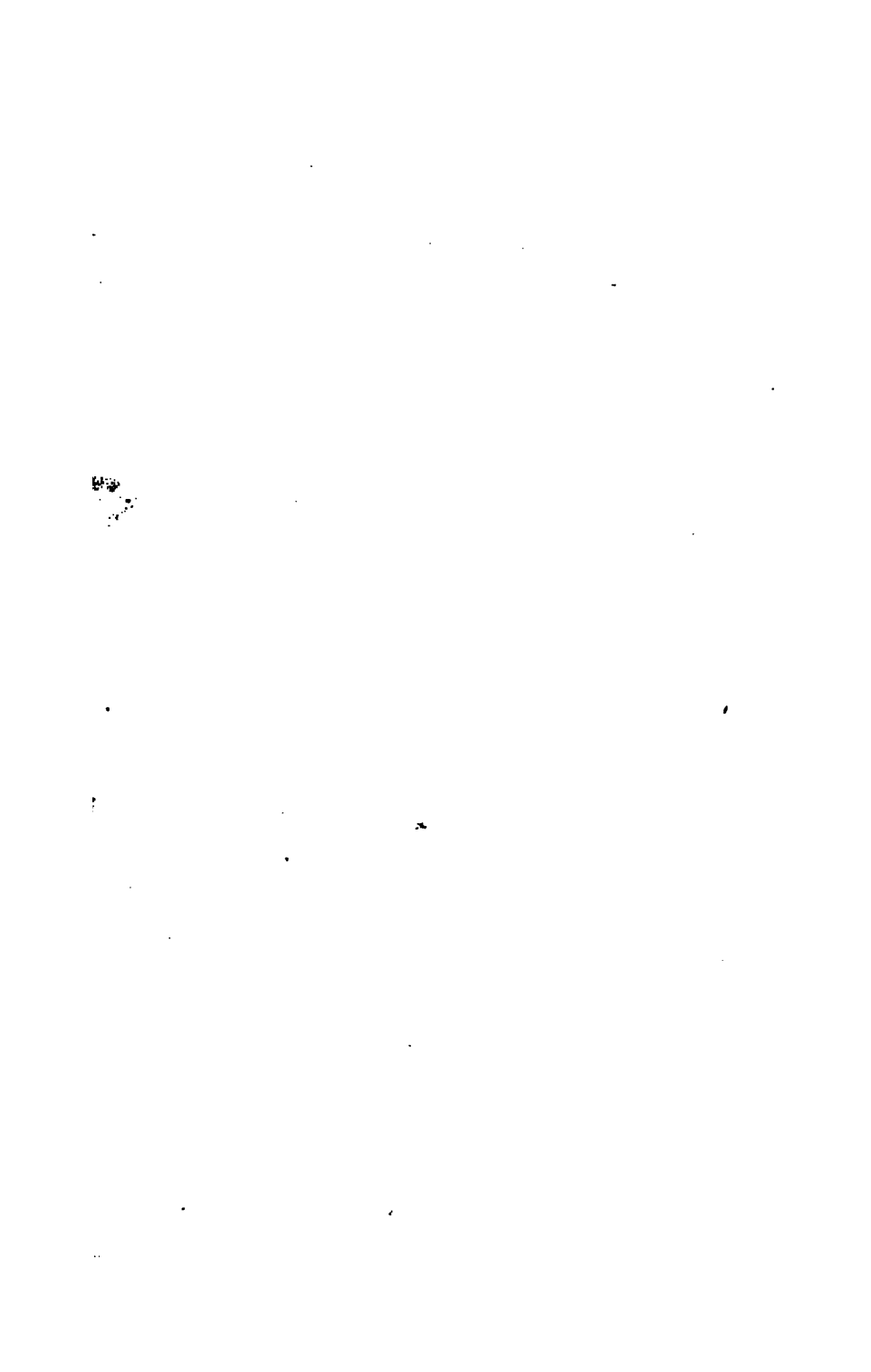
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TEMPLE BAR.

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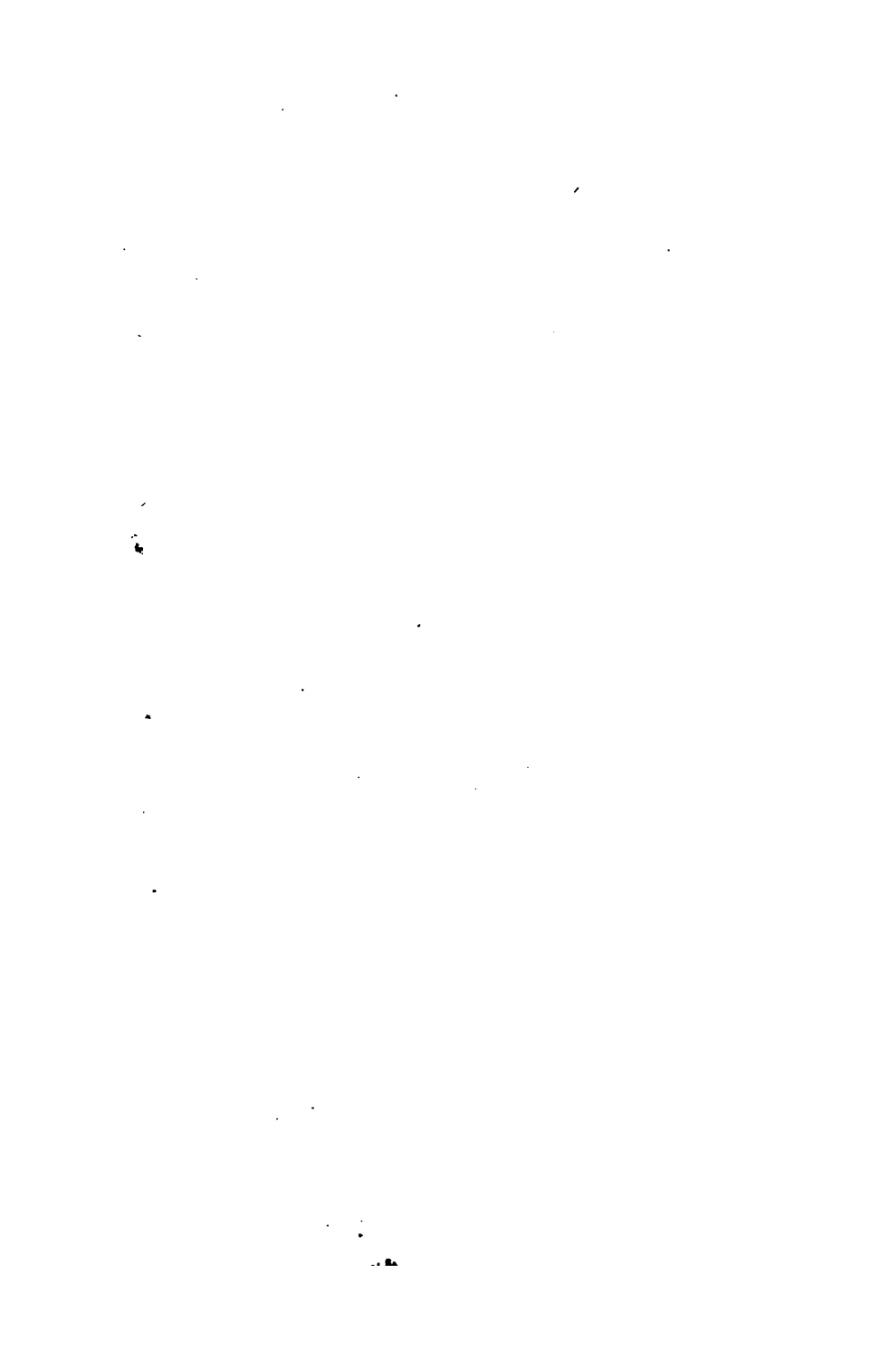
TO
THE REV. JOHN KEATE, D.D.
CANON OF WINDSOR
AND
HEAD MASTER OF ETON,
IN TESTIMONY OF RESPECT FOR
THE GREAT TALENTS AND ACCOMPLISHED SCHOLARSHIP
WHICH
FOR TWENTY YEARS
HAVE GOVERNED AND ANIMATED THAT SCHOOL
IN WHICH
THE AUTHOR RECEIVED HIS EDUCATION,
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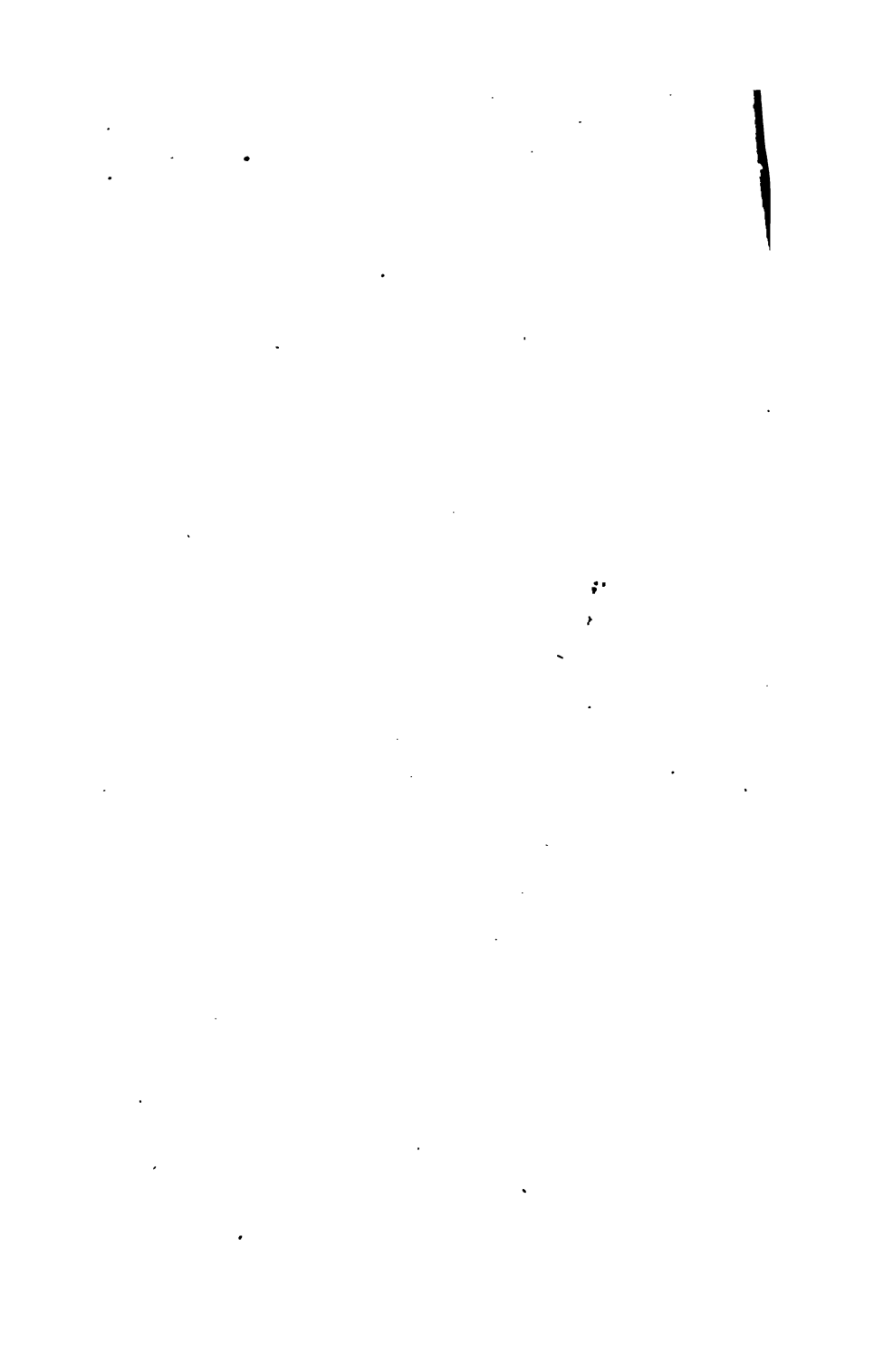


THE Author's intention is, under favorable circumstances, to continue these Introductions through the whole body of Greek Classical Poetry.



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THE STUDY
OF
THE CLASSIC POETS.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

IN submitting this Work to the Public, I trust I may justify myself against any charge of individual presumption by alleging the apparent usefulness of the undertaking, if well executed, and also that the matter itself is principally, though not exclusively, intended for Young Persons. It is possible, indeed, that a perusal of these Introductions may not be unserviceable to many well educated readers of any age and of either sex; but I do not directly address myself to graduates of any degree. By those who are still called Boys, I hope the teaching of him, who has ceased to be one, will be as kindly received as it is affectionately given.

My wish is to enable the youthful student to form a more just and liberal judgment of the characters and merits of the Greek Poets, than he has commonly an opportunity of doing at school;

Principles
of criticism
universal.

and for that purpose to habituate his mind to sound principles of literary criticism. Those principles, it must be remembered, are of universal application: it is inattention to the universality of the principles of criticism, that makes our judgment on literary matters uncertain and inconsistent. Often may we hear or read in the same conversation or book just and ingenious comments on modern authors coupled with the most shallow and mistaken remarks on the ancients; and on the other hand, though much more rarely, we may meet with a sound exposition of the merits of a Greek or Latin Poem, mixed up with, or even illustrated by, parallel passages cited with applause from some worthless favorite of contemporary interest. It is true that various languages, different religions, and distant ages, have produced, and will perpetuate, numerous peculiarities in poems, histories, and orations; but, however these causes may induce a diversity of color and shape, we shall find that the substance of such works of the intellect is in all of them essentially the same. Excellence in all of them must depend, according to their several natures, on the presence of Imagination, Fancy, Good Sense, and Purity of Language; and all that is previously necessary to the critical examination of ancient and modern poetry upon the same principles is, to set aside for the moment those quali-

ties which are the peculiarities of place and time, and then a review of those qualities which remain, and are common to every place and to all time, will be as obvious in the case of a Greek and English, as in that of an English and a French author.

There can be no doubt that this imperfection and obliquity of judgment in literary matters is chiefly occasioned by the exclusive study of the ancient and modern writers in succession only, and rarely or never together, and with light reciprocally reflected. Our youth is as usually absorbed by Greek and Latin, as the rest of our lives is by English, Italian, or French. The living languages are considered as interfering with the exercises of the school, and the study of the learned is too often abandoned or disclaimed in manhood as puerile or pedantic. Hence neither are cultivated with the manifold advantages which a judicious association of both would certainly afford. Undue admiration and undue depreciation are the ordinary consequences of this unreasonable divorce, and whilst by partial and half-learned criticism some insignificant works on either side have attracted undeserved attention, the great writers of all sides are the less honored and the less understood.

One great rule, which, both for its paramount importance, and because it refers to the general

Purity of
language.

token and condition of all other excellence, should never be forgotten, is to require in a writer an invariable purity of language. It is not too much to say, although this *may* exist unaccompanied by other merit, that genius itself never has been, and never can be, fully manifested, excepting in and through this its proper and necessary organ. The purity of language, of which I speak, does not consist merely or chiefly in the sedulous use of words sanctioned by what is called authority, but in a logical harmony of expressions with the thoughts, so that the exact image or conception intended by the writer may be conveyed to the mind of the reader. Words are not only the signs of all thoughts, but seem originally, though subject to several exceptions, to have been the very mental pictures of all visible things. To use words, therefore, in their primary and most simple meanings is one sure mode of preserving purity and truth of diction. Nor will such a rule of style limit the powers or weaken the splendor of the writer; for it may be truly said, that some of the most splendid poets in the world have been those through whose transparent language the face and form of external nature are visible to the mind's eye. Homer, Dante, and Chaucer, as they are the most picturesque of poets, so are they in this respect amongst the most faultless of writers. They found and used their native tongues in the

freshness of youth, when as yet the misdirected action of metaphysical reasoning had not blunted the sharpness, or dimmed the colors, or confused the simplicity of words. In their verses we see sights and hear sounds. Living before the inevitable power of association had distracted the unity and entireness of men's conceptions, they seem even now absolutely above its reach. In them the plainest narrative is not prosaic, nor the most homely images vulgar. Consider, as a sufficient proof of this vividness of representation and this immunity from low associations, the details of the feasting in the *Iliad*,* the torments in the *Inferno*,† or those many noble passages, too long for quotation, in the *Knight's Tale*, and the *Troilus and Cresseide*, of the bright and modern star of our own literature.

It is not perhaps possible in the maturity, much less in the decline of any literature, to *paint* in words as these three immortal poets have done. Yet, as the cause of this excellence in them is obvious, it still is possible to look at them as models in this particular, to learn from them the pure idiom of the Muses, and to stamp upon our minds their union of simplicity, truth and force, as the conservative law of all poetry. If it were necessary to make their merit in this point more conspicuous by a contrast of the opposite defect,

* A. i. 458. f. ix. 206.

† *Divina Commedia*.

it could not be done more strikingly than by comparing a book of Pope's translation with a book of the original Iliad, and Lucan with Dante or with Chaucer. It is not only the whole difference between *seeing* and *hearing of* a thing, but of hearing very indistinctly. In Pope and Lucan the truth of language is often lost: lay aside the metre and the rhythm, translate the sentence into another tongue, and it will be a matter of wonder to you that such trivialisms, not to say such nonsense occasionally, could ever pass for genuine poetry. Apply the same process to Homer, Dante, or Chaucer; lay the body of a passage bare, decompose it to the utmost of your power; the grace of words, the melody of sounds, may indeed be destroyed, yet good sense will in every instance remain conspicuous as the substance or body of the whole.

It is the more necessary to call the youthful student's attention pointedly to the importance of this rule, because it is to be feared that it is daily violated or indirectly rendered of no effect, so far as his own compositions are concerned, by the prevalent estimate of what is called authority for words. That boys should be taught to refer to the works of the great classics as to so many storehouses for individual words, is proper; the abuse is, that not only are words thus taken at random, and severed from a context which perhaps

alone made their use legitimate, but a superstitious reverence for the diction of the qualified writers in the mass is generated, which blinds the judgment of the master to many heavy faults inherent in the pupil's composition itself. Exception is rarely taken to the language of a school exercise if no word is used in it but what may be found in the pages of some classic of Augustan reputation;* whereas a strict compliance with that condition is quite compatible with an admission of false metaphors, false description, and an utter neglect of all truth of thought in general. It is true indeed that we cannot now detect in a dead language all the little deflections from the highest standard of writing, which must have been as apparent to the contemporary critic as similar faults are to us in compositions of our own times; and he who should now pretend to point out the imputed barbarisms of Demosthenes

* Upon this subject it may be remarked with regret that the Greek Prize Odes of the last few years have not been written in the consistent dialect of the Tragic Chorus. The *Æolic* of Sappho herself is surely *in nubibus* to us; and, even if Bishop Blomfield's arrangement of it be authentic, can any young man by the help of analogy with the forms used in some fifty or sixty lines, write upon various subjects in such dialect consistently? The attempt produces a farrago which, in point of Greek, is disgraceful to the reputation of the University; for what can be more lamentably absurd than to see the lowest "bucolisms" of Theocritus thrust in as the necessities of a *Sapphic* ode require? The Greek Professor might very profitably publish a canon on this subject.

or the provincialisms of Livy, would probably display more presumption than acuteness in the attempt. But the rules of logic are unchanging and universal, and any violation of them will be as obvious to the careful student in Latin or Greek as they might be in English; and it may well be added, that unless the classics be read with such a kind and degree of attention that the logic, or, in other words, the sense of the writer is really understood, they will be read to no rational or worthy purpose at all.

Etymology. It follows from the necessity of preserving and appreciating an inviolable purity of language, that it is of the utmost importance in studying Greek to search out the radical word or words of every compound, and also the literal, and therefore primary, meaning of the roots themselves. Without this discipline a boy's scholarship will be laid up rather in the lumber-room of his memory, than be prepared for his use in the workshop of his mind. No regulations* can be too peremp-

* In a great school like Eton, where the forms or classes are necessarily very large, it is not only impossible to call up every boy in every lesson, but even to ask a single question of each individual. It is therefore of great importance that the paper of "Derivations," as it is called, should be demanded frequently and unexpectedly, and be also examined occasionally with great strictness, so that no boy could feel himself safe in coming into school without having looked at the lesson. From what I remember, I am sure more attention might, with great profit to the scholarship of the school, be paid to these papers.

tory in requiring proof that this labor has been undergone. But it must always be borne in mind, that the mere hunting-out of the root will be of little use, unless its original signification be also known, and the process by which, single or in composition, it has acquired a modified, a metaphorical, or even a different meaning, be clearly perceived. Here it is that we have to lament the inveterate practice, perhaps inevitable at present, of learning Greek after, and through the medium of, Latin—a practice, I am persuaded, so injurious to a vivid and exact apprehension of the former language that nothing but the want, or perhaps the novelty, of a good Anglo-Greek Lexicon* and Grammar can excuse the continuance of it in any school. Indeed, with the exception of the French, it may be doubted whether there is any literary language in Europe which would not be a more adequate exponent of Greek than Latin; that the English at least would be so, no reader of Shakspeare, Hooker, or Taylor, who is also a proficient in Greek, can doubt.

I hope I shall be excused if I here venture to advance a step further, and endeavour to explain the difference in kind between the Fancy and the Imagination—the existence of which, affecting in

Fancy and
Imagination.

* Donnegan's Lexicon goes a great way towards removing this charge against English Scholarship. We must still however wait for our Schneider.

some degree all sorts of intellectual operations, has a direct and perpetual bearing on poetry. There is, perhaps, no difference in Metaphysics so necessary to be known by an accomplished critic, and yet none so generally neglected as this. A knowledge of this difference may be used, more than any other, as the touchstone of power, and the sure key by which to open the various chambers of genius.

With very few exceptions, indeed, in books and in conversation, the Fancy and the Imagination are taken to be either absolutely synonymous, or at the utmost as differing degrees of the same faculty. Fancy therefore will be a term for a light and airy kind of Imagination; whilst Imagination will be another word for an ardent and concentrated Fancy. But certainly if there do exist two such different faculties in the mind, we ought, for the sake of perspicuity, to be careful in using the two words distinctly and appropriately. Now I conceive the following passage to be an instance of the exercise of pure Fancy, as contradistinguished from Imagination.

“O, then, I see, Queen Mab has been with you.
She is the fairies’ midwife; and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the forefinger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies,
Athwart men’s noses as they lie asleep;
Her waggon-spokes made of long spinners’ legs;

The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers ;
 The traces, of the smallest spider's web ;
 The collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams ;
 Her whip, of cricket's bone ; the lash, of film ;
 Her waggoner, a small grey-coated gnat,
 Not half so big as a round little worm
 Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid ;
 Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
 Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
 Time out of mind the fairies' coachmakers."*

But the mode and direction of the profound madness of Lear flow from the Imagination of the Poet alone.

" Kent. Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions ?

Lear. I'll see their trial first. Bring in the evidence.
 Thou robed man of justice, take thy place,
 And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
 Bench by his side. You are of the commission,
 Sit you too.

Edgar. Let us deal justly.

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my oath, before this honorable assembly, she kicked the poor king, her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress ; is your name Goneril ?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

Lear. And here's another, whose warped looks proclaim

What store her heart is made of. Stop her there !
 Arms, arms, sword, fire ! Corruption in the place !
 False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape ?

* Rom. and Jul. Act I. Sc. 4.

Edgar. Bless thy five wits!

Lear. The little dogs and all,

Tray, Blanch and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me!

Edgar. Tom will throw his head to them.

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan: see what breeds about her heart: is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts? You, Sir, I entertain you for one of my hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your garments; you will say they are Persian attire; but let them be changed."*

In the first of these passages the images taken from objects of nature or art are presented *as they are*; they are neither modified nor associated; they are, in fact, so many pretty shows passed through a magic lantern, without any connection with the being and feelings of the Speaker or the Poet impressed upon them; we look *at* them, but cannot for a moment feel *for*, or *with*, them. In the second, the images are transfigured; their colors and shapes are modified; one master passion pervades and quickens them; and in them all it is the wild and heart-stricken Father-king that speaks alone. The first is Fancy; the last is Imagination. The one aggregates, the other associates; that presents a spectacle, and presents it only; this projects the man into the object, or attracts it to the man, with a vivifying, humanizing, impersonating energy. In a word, Fancy collects

* Lear, Act III. Sc. 6.

materials from the visible world, and arranges them for exhibition, but it imparts to them no touch of human interest; Imagination takes and moulds the objects of nature at the same moment; it makes them all speak the language of man, and renders them instinct with the inspired breath of human passion. In a scale of intellectual power, Fancy is indeed a lower faculty than the Imagination, but it is also one different from it—as different as juxtaposition is from combination—as accumulation is from union.*

It may be remarked that Similes of Fancy are to the outward sense *more like* the thing intended to be illustrated than Similes of Imagination; but that to the mind's eye the converse is the fact. The Simile of Imagination is really more true. Thus Virgil's—

“Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
Si quis ebur”—

ivory stained with a purple dye—is to the sight a correct picture of a fair body stained with blood; but the resemblance is *visible* only, which was

* As an extreme instance of the distinction here taken, the two following lines have been quoted :

“Lutes, lobsters, seas of milk, and ships of amber.”—Otway.

“What! have *his daughters* brought him to this pass!”

Lear, Act III. Sc. 4.

Coleridge's Biographia Lit. vol. I.

To which may be added that sublime passage in the same play, in which Lear reproaches the *heavens* for storming on his grey head—for that “*ye yourselves are old!*”

indeed all that the poet's purpose in that instance required. We do not *feel* any resemblance between stained ivory and a gory body; but a Simile of Imagination was not wanted. Again, from Virgil—

“Purpureus veluti cum flos, succisus aratro,
Languescit moriens.”

Here there is very slight *visible likeness* between the dying Euryalus and a flower cut up by the plough; but to the mind's eye no two things can more resemble each other than a beautiful boy suddenly killed, and a beautiful flower violently cut from its stalk and fading on the ground. So, in the Iliad,* Apollo is said to come down from Olympus—*νυκτὶ εἰσινάος*—like Night, and Achilles seems to Priam† like the star Sirius on the extremity of the plain. These two Similes are admirably true to the Imagination, but give little more than a *hint* of the actual bodily image; though in Pope's *terrific* maltreatment of the latter simile it is neither true to mind or eye. The more we reflect on such Similes as the last, the more deeply we recognize their intrinsic truth; the longer we contemplate a Simile of mere Fancy, the more we perceive its resemblance to be casual, contingent, and not founded in the nature of the two things brought into parallel. That resem-

* A'. i. v. 47.

† X'. xxii. v. 25-32.

blance which is one to Sight only, *may* be acknowledged by one man and denied by another; it *may* be perceptible in Asia and imperceptible in Europe; but a Simile founded on moral relations will be true, and felt to be true, wherever man is not wholly barbarous, throughout the world and during all time.

It is seldom that any man can be supposed to possess either of these faculties to the absolute exclusion of the other; yet it is perhaps not improper to characterize many of the eminent poets by that *one* which predominates in their works. Hence we may say that there is more of Fancy in Sophocles, more of Imagination in Æschylus; so more of the first in Horace, more of the last in Lucretius; the same again of Ariosto, as compared with Dante; and we may, with great accuracy, call Cowley a fanciful, and Milton an imaginative, poet; whilst both epithets must be given where they are both most due, to our single Shakspeare alone. Be this distinction, however, sound or not in point of metaphysical truth, I am persuaded the principle involved in it will be found, if borne in mind, a very useful rule for, or aid to, a discriminating criticism.

Another point of some importance to young scholars in facilitating the acquirement of a full and lively knowledge of the classic writers, is the use of translations. It is generally discountenanced at public schools. There are Latin ver-

Use of
translations.

sions indeed printed at the end of some of the Greek authors, but a recourse to these is always clandestine. Now with a view of teaching the languages grammatically, and indeed of teaching universal grammar once for all, this is quite right, and could not be abandoned without running a chance of destroying the very character of our schools; but the question is, whether there may not be cases in which a tutor will act discreetly in recommending the use of translations under certain conditions. I know nothing that can justify the having recourse to a Latin translation of a Greek writer. Greek, as a language, should be learnt by *Lexicon, Grammar, and Exercises*;* but the force, and fulness, and peculiarities of any given author may not unfrequently be more

* I understand that the practice of doing Greek verses has much increased of late years at Eton; but a boy may write very good Greek verses without being able to put two lines of English into grammatical, much less into elegant, Greek prose. At an Examination at the University this is felt in an instant. Room might perhaps be found, by an occasional omission of "Lyrics," for a Greek prose exercise; or the "Theme" might be ordered to be in Greek. More of the language would be taught by working one Theme than by composing verses for a month together. With regard also to the contents of the three principal Books of Selections at Eton—*Scriptores Græci, Poetæ Græci, and Scriptores Romani*—I will venture to suggest that two-thirds of the Extracts from Lucian in the first should be omitted, and the space filled up with Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Demosthenes, and Polybius; that an equal portion of Theocritus and Callimachus be dropped from the second, and replaced by Extracts from Pindar, the Tragedians, and Aristophanes; and that so much of Livy and Paternulus be expunged from the third as may make room for an adequate specimen of Sallust, not one line

strongly and more familiarly seized by an ultimate collation with some approved translation. But no Latin translation can be adequate to any Greek original. It serves sometimes to prompt the *English* of a word, or to show the order of construction, two points for which translations ought not to be used at all; but it never conveys the color and feeling, or familiarizes us with the character, of the author, for which alone the student ought to be permitted to refer to it. Upon this principle all *prose* translations whatever of the Classic *Poets* ought to be prohibited; for they *can* teach nothing but what ought to be learnt in another way; but I am sure it would be very profitable to a boy, if, after having construed an Oration of Demosthenes, or a Book of Tacitus, he were to read the first fluently and at once in the English of Francis, and the second in that of Murphy; or, still better, where it is possible, in the Italian of Davanzati.

Another thing much to be wished is, that after a boy has worked out a book or other given por-

of whose works is ever read by a boy in the usual routine of the school. It may be remarked too, that some very inferior parts of Cicero might well give way to Selections from his Orations.

The principle upon which Selections for Schools ought to be made is—not to pick out the *beauties*, the purple patches, from the Classics, but—to select such passages in matter and length as will convey a just impression of the author's *general* manner. Who could guess that Herodotus was a very spirited *historian* from the pretty *tales* transplanted from his work into the *Scriptores Græci*?

tion of a classic poem, he should read it through once more without the let or hinderance of verbal difficulties, and thereby observe the connection of the parts, and impress upon his mind a more vivid conception of the whole. Pindar would never have been called an obscure or a rambling poet, if this advice had been always remembered. It is here, perhaps, that the salutary practice of learning the poets by heart ought to be praised and its continuance warmly recommended. The superior facility in composition, and the finer tact in imitating the Classic Poets—a general characteristic of boys educated at Eton—is in a great degree attributable to the prevalence of this custom.

The preceding observations have been proposed as applicable in the just criticism of the works of all poets, whether ancient or modern; but there are also certain peculiar properties characterizing the Greeks and Romans, and contradistinguishing them from the present nations of Europe, which must be known, felt, and borne in mind by those who would study the classical literature aright. The most essential of these consist in the facts that the old Greek and Roman poets were—

- I. Pagans.
- II. Southern, or Inhabitants of the South of Europe.
- III. Ignorant of Chivalry.

I. The spirit of the old Paganism is more freely diffused in the poetry than in any other part of the ancient literature. The Fancy and the Imagination, the two chief working faculties of a poet, are the most susceptible of a deep impression from the forms and influences of a national Mythology; and therefore it is that while in their historians, their orators, or even their philosophers, we may, for the most part, recognize the Greeks and Romans for our own contemporaries of some foreign nation, in their poets we must be conscious of a tone oftentimes completely alien to the moral or popular associations of modern days. Not detailing the chances of actual wars, or (with an exception, sometimes, on the tragic stage,) the intrigues of ambition, which in all ages must be nearly the same; not aiming to persuade an audience to a given measure by means identical with those in use in every country; not speculating clandestinely on the probable amount of truth in metaphysical or religious systems;—the poet, taking his stand, as he did, upon the sure ground of human passion, addressed himself nevertheless to the common heart of his own countrymen of every rank and of every age. His object was to please and to captivate the minds of all, and when he taught, his lessons were, for the most part, conveyed under the form of familiar and favorite fable. The morality of the nation was his mo-

Classic
Poets—Pa-
gans.

ality, the popular religion in general was his also. With him the eternal dwellers of Olympus spoke, and moved, and had a being; with him the common powers or functions of nature were impersonated; an old and awful Genius lay shrouded in the dark-crested waves of Scamander, and flowers and sacrificial wine were thank-offerings meet for the secret Naiad of Bandusia.

Yet, as between the Greeks and Romans in general, so between individual poets of either nation in particular, this common spirit of Paganism is displayed in various degrees of intensity, and in some instances even under different forms. It would, however, be anticipating what will appear more properly hereafter, if, in a general Introduction, I were to enter further into this subject than to point out in a summary way the vividness and reality of the superhuman presence and agency in the Greek poetry, as contrasted with that indifference, if not scepticism, which, as it were, enabled and often induced the Romans to use their Mythology expressly for ornamental purposes, or the mere machinery of a fable.* Hereafter also there will be a more fitting place for illustrating the three marked aspects which that Mythology assumed in Greece—popular and picturesque in Homer and Theocritus—mild, benignant, *reli-*

* Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit.—*Hor. Ad Pisones*, v. 191.

giours in Pindar—mysterious, malignant, inexorable in the Tragedians. The relics also of a system anterior and opposed to that of the Olympian Theogony, as it is discoverable in Æschylus, and the history and nature of the Samothracian or Cabeiric Mysteries will become objects of attention.

II. Intimately connected with the character of the Religion of the ancient Classics is the fact of their being natives and inhabitants of the South of Europe. Whether Montesquieu* has not contended for an influence of climate on the laws and governments of men, which is disproved by history and experience, may well be doubted; but that the Greeks and Italians, from the earliest times to this hour, have, as nations, been contradistinguished from the Northern tribes by a more sensuous conception of the Divinity, and by a craving after a visible and tangible representation of Him on earth, is indisputable. It is not difficult to account for the fact. The inhabitant† of

Classic
Poets—
Southerns.

* Esp. des Loix.

† When I wrote this passage, I am ashamed to say that I had not read the Excursion; but I seize this opportunity of strengthening the argument by quoting these glorious lines:

Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked; and when and wheresoe'er he moved,
Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, upon the wind, the articulate Voice
Of God; and angels to his sight appeared,
Crowning the glorious hills of Paradise;

those sunny lands, where the light of day is so bountifully shed abroad, was naturally a worship-

Or through the groves gliding like morning mist,
Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked
With winged messengers; who daily brought
To his small Island in the ethereal deep
Tidings of joy and love.

* * *

The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers, and fertile plains, and sounding shores,
Under a cope of variegated sky,
Could find commodious place for every God,
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
From the surrounding countries—at the choice
Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,
As nicest observation furnished hints
For studious fancy, did his hand bestow
On fluent operations a fixed shape;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show
Of Art, this palpable array of Sense,
On every side encountered; in despite
Of the gross fictions, chanted in the streets
By wandering Rhapsodists; and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denials hourly urged
Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT hung,
Beautiful Region! o'er thy towns and farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;
And emanations were perceived; and acts
Of immortality, in nature's course,
Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
As bonds, on grave Philosopher imposed
And armed Warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
When piety more awful had relaxed.

* * *

In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretched
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,

per of the external face of nature; his studies,
his exercises, his amusements, were all in the

With music lulled his indolent repose :
And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
Even from the blazing Chariot of the Sun,
A beardless youth, who touched a golden lute,
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.
The nightly Hunter, lifting up his eyes
Towards the crescent Moon, with grateful heart
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport ;
And hence, a beaming goddess with her nymphs,
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove
(Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave)
Swept in the storm of chase, as Moon and Stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills,
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
The zephyrs, fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not, for love, fair objects, whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side ;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard—
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome deities ; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring god !

Excursion, Book IV.

open air, and he prayed and sacrificed in the face of heaven. By a natural impulse of gratitude and of admiration, which acted in the absence of a revealed knowledge of the true God, the early Shepherd or Herdsman would fain deify the fountains and rivers which purified him, the winds which refreshed him, the Sun and the Moon which lighted him; but *these* were either invisible influences, or bodies frequently or always out of his reach, and oftentimes withdrawn from his sight. He therefore wanted a visible and tangible Form, which with various aspect might symbolically represent them all—which he could believe might sympathize with humanity, and to which he might raise his eyes in adoration without debasement. Where could he find such a Form? His own was the only one. He labored to shape the log or the stone, but his art failed him. At length, in course of time, Sculpture rose to that consummate power, that marble could be wrought into shapes worthy, as it seemed, of that Immortal and Beautiful, of which they were either the symbols or the images accordingly as the Imagination of the spectator was more or less purified by philosophy. After this epoch the creations of the art were multiplied; sometimes embodying the already existing notions of a Divinity, at others boldly chiseling a new figure of the Sky, or the Sea, or the Wood, and setting it up for as much

worship as admiration or superstition would render to it. The simulacra Deorum were sacred essentials in the popular and actual religion of the nation. No doubts of philosophy, no ridicule of satire, availed in later ages to weaken that congenial fondness for corporeal exhibition of the gods which their laws sanctioned and their taste made delightful. When indeed Christianity took root in those countries, its converts abjured this craving after idols as a mark of Paganism, and so long as the ancient Mythology had any separate establishment in the empire, the spiritual worship which our religion demands, and so essentially implies as only fitting for it, was preserved in its purity by means of the salutary contrast. But no sooner had the Church become completely triumphant and exclusive, and the parallel of Pagan idolatry totally removed, than the old constitutional appetite revived in all its original force; and after a short but fierce struggle with the famous Iconoclasts, an image worship was established and consecrated by bulls and canons, which, in whatever light it is regarded, differed in no respect, except in the names of its objects, from that which had existed for so many ages as the chief characteristic of the religious faith of the Gentiles.

This uncontrollable tendency to what has been called in one word Anthropomorphism, or a passion for representing the Infinite and the Invisible

in human shape, is a striking feature in the works of the Greek and Latin Classic Poets, and of those of modern Italy; for it is always in the poetry of a nation that we are to look for an expression of the genuine feelings and opinions of the people, as they exist in the very constitution of the national character. In almost all the great poets of whom we are speaking, the inability to spiritualize and the power to paint seem in equal proportions; and though it be true that on the given plan of the representations of the regions of the dead in the *Æneid* and the *Divine Comedy*—*Æneas* in the first, and *Dante* himself in the last, being supposed eye-witnesses therein—a minuteness of detail is dramatically proper, and constitutes that verisimilitude, which is so charming; yet that they, and especially that the Christian *Dante*, should adopt *such* a mode of describing that unknown world of shades, and having adopted it, should execute it with such a depth of body and intensity of color throughout, is as clearly deducible from, and as strongly characteristic of, the national propension to materialism of a certain kind, as the very different conception of the same awful subject by *Milton* is of the predominance of a contrary tendency in a people of Northern origin.

For the converse of what has been just said of the Greeks and Italians, is generally true of all

the nations of Scandinavian or Teutonic descent. A rigorous climate, a cloudy atmosphere, immense forests, and the barrier of a frozen or a stormy ocean, made these as habitually the dwellers in caves and woods as those were in the open air. They sought their refuge for months from the unlovely face of nature in huts* under ground, and their joys in a winter of intoxication.† The most darksome recess of the forest was the abode of the Druid priest,‡ where the warrior gods of Odin's race were not unfrequently appeased by human sacrifices. Too rude and impatient to cultivate the builder's or the sculptor's art, they had no temples but interwoven foliage, nor altars but the raised turf. They prayed to or consulted their gods in gloom and in fear, but they did not represent them by any image or symbol.§ From the earliest period in which we know anything certain of this vast nation, the Germans of the Roman Empire, down to the present hour, whithersoever it has migrated, and in the exact pro-

* Solent et subterraneos specus aperire, eosque multo insuper fimo onerant, suffugium hiemi.—*Tacit. Germ.* 16.

† Si induleris ebrietati, suggerendo quantum concupiscunt, haud minus facile vitiis, quam armis, vincentur.—*Tacit. Germ.* 23.

‡ Nemora alta remotis

Incolitis lucis.—*Pharsal.* I. v. 453, 454.

§ Ceterum, nec cohibere parietibus Deos, neque in ullam humani oris speciem adsimulare, ex magnitudine coelestium arbitrantur; lucos ac nemora consecrant, Deorumque nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident.—*Germ.* 9.

portion in which it has preserved the purity of its Northern blood, we may trace in its manners first, and subsequently in its literature, a comparative neglect of the common face of nature, a fondness for a shadowy and unreal romance, a seeking after the abstract and the mysterious, and a passion for descending into the depths of the spiritual being of man. Hence, if there be fewer pictures for the mind's eye in the Northern poetry, it speaks more awfully to the conscience and to the affections of humanity, than that of Italy or of Greece.

Chivalry.

III. But neither the spirit of the old Paganism, nor that strong addiction to objects of sense, of which we have just been speaking, so strikingly distinguishes the classic writers from those of modern Europe, as their conception and expression of the passion of Love. The origin and growth of that gentle yet almost despotic empire which the weaker and the fairer sex at present exercises over the stronger, in every civilized country in the world, are, for the greater part, the work of Christianity and Chivalry. The converse of such a state of feeling is a uniform characteristic of the writings of the Greeks and Romans, though in different degrees, and still remains so of the manners of all those nations on which the light of the Gospel has not yet shone. By the holy religion of Christ polygamy and concubinage were forbidden, and marriage became

indissoluble and more honorable; by it women were declared equal objects of its precepts and joint-heirs of its promises, and love and care became the acknowledged rights of a Christian wife at the hands of her husband. Beyond this, however, it did not immediately operate. Indeed, what with an increasing barbarism of manners and the constant pestilence of a corrupt and corrupting priesthood, very much of that mysterious dignity which the history as well as the spirit of the Gospel had conferred on women was destroyed; when, in consequence of an event among the most singular and wonderful in the annals of mankind, it revived in superadded splendor, never thenceforth to be obscured but in an eclipse of Christian civilization itself. That event was the first Crusade. Out of the habits of individual combats, and the disorganized state of society consequent upon the breaking-up of those vast Oriental armaments, sprung that romantic police, known by the name of Knight-errantry, or more generally, of Chivalry. To succour the distressed and to defend the weak in all cases was the bounden duty of a knight; but more especially was he sworn to relieve, at any hazard, a woman from difficulty, and to protect her from danger or insult at the expense of his life. Hence and from the ground of that reverential attention to women, common to Love.

all the nations of Northern origin,* (and which operates, even in the present day, to produce that more august conception of the wedded union which so widely and so honorably distinguishes the English, Dutch, German, Norwegian, and other Northern races from the Italians,) grew up, on the part of the knight, and subsequently of the gentleman, who is his successor, that respectful courtesy, that dignified submission to all women in general, as such, which when kindled into passion for some one in particular, becomes the sacred and enlivening flame, by which every faculty of the mind is developed, every affection of the heart purified, and which alone can promise happiness on earth, by a satisfaction of the instinctive appetite in the light and under the sanction of a spiritual union. So pervading has the combined action of Christianity and Chivalry in this respect been, on all the people of modern Europe, that there is scarcely one among the many amatory poets who have lived since the revival of letters, in whose writings a new and exalting influence is not distinctly, although too often unintentionally, perceptible. There are, indeed, various degrees of this refinement and tenderness in the moderns, as there are various degrees of the sensual theory

* Inesse quietiam (*fæminis*) sanctum aliquid et providum putant; nec aut consilia earum aspernantur, aut responsa negligunt.
—*Germ.* 8.

of the ancients; but enough exists of either kind in each respectively, to justify us in distinguishing the love of Christendom as the passion of Affection—the love of Paganism as the passion of Appetite.

What then is that love which has derived its name from the divine Plato? An exception—like Plato himself. It was not fitted for, it never reached, the poets. It was indeed a high and noble effort of the pure imagination, and to ardent and exalted minds it might seem an explanation of their own internal workings; but such a reciprocal appetency of spirits, springing from a predestined and immutable sympathy, was not that human love which could be sung upon the lyre.

Perhaps a second or middle stage of this theory may be seen in Petrarch and in the minor pieces of Dante, when the love had become human, but was, for the most part, uninspired by any real passion. Petrarch, indeed, was excellent in whatever character he wrote, Troubadour or Platonist; but he did not combine both these modes of thinking and feeling into one action of the heart. Passionate here, metaphysical there, he rarely concentrates his passion and his metaphysics. To make that double action one, to impregnate philosophy with passion—to purify the heart and to soften the mind—to Platonize, as it were, humanity, and to humanize Platonism—this was

Plato.

Dante and
Petrarch.

left undone by Dante and Petrarch, and perhaps never could have been effected by any of the descendants of the ancient Romans. Intellectual abstractions could not unite with the spirit of Anthropomorphism formerly; and the same opugnancy between them now is manifest in the poetry, the philosophy, and the religion of the Christian inhabitants of Italy.

Spenser and
Shakspeare.

The supplying of this deficiency, and the consequent perfecting of the theory of Love, is the work of English poets. In Spenser and Shakspeare may be found that exquisite intermingling of philosophy, passion, and domestic fondness, which we all feel at once to be the true desideratum of the virtuous mind, and believe to be the best earthly consummation of our imperfect nature. The spirit is loved for itself alone—*αὐτὸ καὶ αὐτὸ μεθ' αὐτοῦ, μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν**—(to quote what cannot be translated,) but it is loved through the medium of the purified passions; for Beauty is the virtue of the Body, as Virtue is the beauty of the Mind, and that Love is imperfect which affects to reject either the one or the other.

Conclusion.

I have now made, in a summary way, the few remarks which seemed to me of general importance to the classical studies of a youthful scholar. But conscious, as I am, that the tendency of some

* Plato, Sympos. "Itself alone by itself, eternally one and single."

of the foregoing observations may appear objectionable from the collation of the ancients and moderns, and from the exceptions taken to the use of Latin as a medium for learning Greek, and fearing that it may be inferred that my intention was in any respect to lower the rank or estimation of the learned languages themselves, I must not finish this Introduction without most earnestly protesting against any such conclusion, so contrary to my judgment and my inclinations. However one of those tongues may be an imperfect exponent of the other, it is in itself admirable. Nay, I think all the great masters of the ancient literatures had this one natural advantage over all who, in modern times, have attempted to tread in their footsteps in the struggle for immortality. The Greek and the Roman caught, each from his mother's lips, a language which gave them heroic mastery in the contest, without any labor of their own. We may even now hear them challenging posterity in charmed accents, and daunting our rivalry with armour of celestial temper.

I am not one who has grown old in literary retirement, devoted to classical studies with an exclusiveness which might lead to an over-weening estimate of these two noble languages. Few, I will not say evil, were the days allowed to me for such pursuits; and I was constrained, still young and an unripe scholar, to forego them for the

duties of an active and laborious profession. They are now amusements only, however delightful and improving. Far am I from assuming to understand all their riches, all their beauty, or all their power; yet I can profoundly feel their immeasurable superiority to all we call modern; and I would fain think that there are many even among my young readers who can now, or will hereafter, sympathize with the expression of my ardent admiration.

Greek.

Greek—the shrine of the genius of the old world; as universal as our race, as individual as ourselves; of infinite flexibility, of indefatigable strength, with the complication and the distinctness of nature herself; to which nothing was vulgar, from which nothing was excluded; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English; with words like pictures, with words like the gossamer film of the summer; at once the variety and picturesqueness of Homer, the gloom and the intensity of Æschylus; not compressed to the closest by Thucydides, not fathomed to the bottom by Plato, not sounding with all its thunders, nor lit up with all its ardors even under the Promethean touch of Demosthenes! And Latin—the voice of empire and of war, of law and of the state; inferior to its half-parent and rival in the embodying of passion and in the distinguishing of thought, but equal to it in

Latin.

sustaining the measured march of history, and superior to it in the indignant declamation of moral satire;* stamped with the mark of an imperial and despotizing republic; rigid in its construction, parsimonious in its synonymes; reluctantly yielding to the flowery yoke of Horace, although opening glimpses of Greek-like splendor in the occasional inspirations of Lucretius; proved, indeed, to the uttermost by Cicero, and by *him* found wanting; yet majestic in its bareness, impressive in its conciseness; the true language of History, instinct with the spirit of nations, and not with the passions of individuals; breathing the maxims of the world and not the tenets of the schools; one and uniform in its air and spirit, whether touched by the stern and haughty Sallust, by the open and discursive Livy, by the reserved and thoughtful Tacitus.

These inestimable advantages, which no modern skill can wholly counterpoise, are known and felt by the scholar alone. He has not failed, in the sweet and silent studies of his youth, to drink deep at those sacred fountains of all that is just and beautiful in human language. The thoughts and the words of the master-spirits of Greece and

* I do not think any Greek could have understood, or sympathized with, Juvenal. Is it possible to put into Greek such lines as these?

"Summum crede nefas animam præferre pudori,
Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas."—VIII. 83-4.

Rome are inseparably blended in his memory; a sense of their marvellous harmonies, their exquisite fitness, their consummate polish, has sunken for ever in his heart, and thence throws out light and fragrantcy upon the gloom and the annoyances of his maturer years. No avocations of professional labor will make him abandon their wholesome study; in the midst of a thousand cares he will find an hour to recur to his boyish lessons—to re-peruse them in the pleasurable consciousness of old associations and in the clearness of manly judgment, and to apply them to himself and to the world with superior profit. The more extended his sphere of learning in the literature of modern Europe, the more deeply, though the more wisely, will he reverence that of classical antiquity: and in declining age, when the appetite for magazines and reviews, and the ten-times repeated trash of the day, has failed, he will retire, as it were, within a circle of schoolfellow friends, and end his studies, as he began them, with his Homer, his Horace, and his Shakspeare.

(

HISTORY
OF THE
ORIGIN AND PRESERVATION
OF
THE ILIAD.

It is not strictly within the plan of this work to enter into any systematic discussion of the genuineness or the history of the several poems, the moral and poetical characters of which I have alone or principally proposed to myself to examine. Whether they were written by the persons whose names they bear in our days or not, their intrinsic merits, and, consequently, their rank in Greek literature, must remain the same, and be equally a worthy object of our studious inquiries. I might, perhaps, therefore have declined, without impropriety, any notice of what, for the sake of brevity, may be termed the Homeric Question; for, surely, except so far as the deep impression of early associations may render even a critical scepticism painful to the mind, it must be a matter of perfect indifference to us how or by whom the supposed works of Homer were really com-

posed. The decision of that question cannot in the slightest degree affect our estimate of their quality. Whether *all* the poems that are now vulgarly attributed to Homer were his production—whether the Iliad and the Odyssey, both or one of them only, can lay claim to such parentage—or whether, lastly, any such person as Homer, or, indeed, any individual author of the former poem ever existed—whichever of these propositions be true—it seems to be a matter of little importance to those whose object is not to spell the inscriptions on mouldering monuments, but to inhale the breath of ancient grandeur and beauty amid the undoubted ruins of the great. The Iliad and the Odyssey exist; we have them in our hands, and we should not set them the less in honor though we were to doubt the impress of any Homer's hand, any more than we should cease to reverence the genius or the ruins of Rome, because shepherds or worse may have laid the first stone of her walls.

It is this very excellence, however, of the Homeric poetry, and the apparent peculiarity of the instance, together with the celebrity of the controversy, to which the scepticism of some modern scholars has given birth, that seem to compel me to devote a few pages to a notice of the points in question. I shall content myself, nevertheless, with stating shortly what has been urged *against*

the genuineness of the verses, or at least of the present form, of the Iliad, referring the student to the Introductions themselves for what affects the other Homeric poems, and leaving him to weigh the objections against his own prepossessions and to judge for himself.

I believe there is no trace of any doubt having ever been entertained of the personal existence of Homer, as the author of the Iliad, till the close of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, when two Frenchmen, Hedelin* and Perrault, first suggested the outlines of a theory respecting the composition of that poem, which has been since developed with such profound learning and such wonderful talent by Heyne, that its original authors are now almost forgotten. The substance of this theory is that whether any such person as Homer ever lived or not, the Iliad was not composed entirely by him or by any other individual, but is a compilation, methodized indeed and arranged by successive editors, but still a compilation of minstrelsies, the works of various poets† in the heroic age, all having one common

Homer's
existence.

* Hedelin denied that any such person as Homer ever existed, and maintained that the Iliad was made up "ex tragædiis et variis canticis de trivio, mendicorum et circulatorum, à la manière des chansons du Pontneuf."—Wolfe, Pro. 26, in not.

† Wolfe believed the verses now constituting the Iliad to have been written (I should rather say, *made or invented*) by one Homer, but in short rhapsodies, unconnected purposely with each other, and

theme and direction, the wars of Troy and the exploits of the several Grecian chiefs engaged in them. And however startling this theory may appear at first sight, however unlike any thing of which we may have heard, and however impossible in the age in which we now live, there are nevertheless some arguments in its favor that with all calm and serious inquirers will ever save it from indifference or contempt.*

Argument.

It is said that the argument drawn from the apparently undoubting belief of the earliest as well as of the greatest writers of Greece after the Homeric age, and from the general consent of all mankind in the same faith ever since, proves *too much*—that besides the Iliad, Odyssey, Batrachomyomachia, Hymns and Epigrams, at least twenty† other poems were in former times as-

that they were put together as after-mentioned. Much of his argument, however, of the impossibility of one man having *composed* the Iliad in form as we now have it, applies to the theory in the text

* Bentley expressed an opinion similar to Wolfe's on the history and compilation of the Iliad. "Homer wrote a sequel of Songs and Rhapsodies to be sung by himself, for small earnings and good cheer, at Festivals and other days of merriment: the Iliad he made for the men, and the Odysseis for the other sex. These loose Songs were not collected together in the form of an Epic Poem till about 500 years after."—Letter to N. N. by Phileleuth. Lipsiens. s. 7.

† Amazonia.

Thebaid.

Arachnomachia.

Geranomachia.

Iresione.

Epigoni.

Epithalamia.

Epieichlides.

Capra.

Ilias Minor, &c. &c.

Fabric. Lib. 11. c. 2.

cribed to Homer—that many passages of these poems are preserved which contain variances from, and even direct contradictions* of, the tenor of the Iliad—that in the age of Herodotus† the Cyprian verses and the Epigoni were *commonly* considered as Homeric poems—that Thucydides quotes‡ the Hymn to Apollo exactly in the same tone in which he quotes, or speaks of, the Iliad—that nevertheless there is now a general opinion on the part of all scholars that these Hymns are not by the author of the Iliad—that Plato expels Homer from his republic on account of a passage§ in the Odyssey—that nevertheless many of the ancients as well as moderns who did not doubt the genuineness of the Iliad, doubted and denied that of the Odyssey—that there is nothing in this weakness of critical discernment, even when imputed to such great writers as Herodotus, Thucydides and Plato, which should surprise the attentive student of the old Greek Literature, it being evident that in the times of the republican inde-

* In the little Iliad Neoptolemus is represented as carrying Æneas prisoner on board his ship. See *post*, in *Fragm.*, and compare with Iliad γ'. xx. 307-8.

Νῦν δὲ δὴ Αἰνείας βίη Τρῳέσσιν ἀνάξει

Καὶ παῖδες παίδων, τοὶ κεν μετόπισθε γένωνται.

Then shall Æneas o'er the Trojans reign,

And children's children his great line maintain.

† Euterp. 117. Melpom. 32.

‡ Lib. III. 104.

§ A'. xi. 487.

pendence the investigation of the genuineness of national compositions formed no part even of scientific Criticism, much less of the general duties of the Philosopher and Historian—that as Herodotus and Thucydides quote Homer merely for historical evidence, so Plato censures him for political reasons, for which purposes these poems were equally proper, whether the common belief as to their origin were founded in fact or not—that in modern Europe, indeed, at the revival of letters this branch of Criticism became of paramount importance, and conferred the greatest benefits on awakening Learning by rescuing the genuine relics of ancient Greece and Rome from the mass of fiction and interpolation, which a superstitious barbarism of manners and intellect for seven centuries had accumulated upon them—but that the early Greeks knew no literature except their own, and that, considering how little attention even we, with our different habits and capabilities, ever pay to the mere external history of our earliest works, we have no reason to think it unaccountable that the Chronicler, the Historian, or even the Philosopher of old Greece, either never doubted or but hinted their doubts as to the genuineness of a body of popular poetry, known to be of Asiatic growth and of an antiquity open to nothing but conjecture.

It is further said that the art of writing and the

use of manageable writing materials were entirely or all but entirely unknown in Greece and the Islands at the supposed date of the composition of the Iliad—that, if so, this poem could not have been committed to writing during the time of such its composition—that, in a question of comparative probabilities like this, it is a much grosser improbability that even the single Iliad, amounting after all curtailments and expungings to upwards of 15,000 lines, should have been actually conceived and perfected in the brain of one man with no other help but his own or others' memory, than that it should in fact be the result of the labors of several distinct authors—that if the Odyssey be counted, the improbability is doubled—that if we add, upon the authority of Thucydides and Aristotle, the Hymns and Margites, not to say the Batrachomyomachia, that which was improbable becomes absolutely impossible—that all that has been so often said as to the fact of as many lines, or more, having been committed to memory, is beside the point in question, which is not whether 15,000 or 30,000 lines may not be learnt by heart from a book or manuscript, but whether one man can *compose* a poem of that length, which, rightly or not, shall be thought to be a perfect model of symmetry and consistency of parts, without the aid of writing materials—that, admitting the superior probability of such a thing in a primitive

age, we know nothing analogous to such a case, and that it so transcends the common limits of intellectual power, as at the least to merit with as much justice as the opposite opinion the character of improbability.

Rhapso-
dists.

A great number of petty defects and inconsistencies are then insisted on, some of which, together with other matters, are noticed in the following Introduction; and the history of the actual preservation of the Iliad is said to corroborate the probability of its fragmentary origin. Concerning this history there is no great diversity of opinion. There is an almost endless list of authorities to show that the first form under which the people of the continent of Greece became acquainted with the verses of Homer was that of Songs or metrical narratives recited by minstrels, probably with some musical accompaniments, at feasts, sacrifices or other public solemnities. These minstrels or reciters were universally termed 'Ραψωδοί or Rhapsodists, either because they worked or joined together their own or others' verses and published them, as it were, in something like a connected form; or because they held a staff (ῥάβδον) in their hands when about to recite. The verses sung or recited at one time were called 'Ραψωδία or a Rhapsody, which could not of course have been of a length disproportioned to the occasions which called it forth. A familiar instance

of such a performance may be seen in the legend of the *Intrigue of Mars and Venus*, recited by Demodocus to the lyre in the eighth* book of the *Odyssey*. The Rhapsodists of the earlier ages were evidently the same as the *Ἀοιδοὶ* or singers: like Phemius and Demodocus, they seem to have recited their own compositions, and thus published and preserved them to the utmost of their power, apparently in the only way in their power. All the accounts we have of Homer, whether in genuine or spurious history, concur in representing him a Rhapsodist of this description, wandering through the islands and on the Asiatic coast, and earning fame and a maintenance by the recitation of his verses.

Subsequently to this, though immediately connected with it, came a second race of Rhapsodists, who made it their entire study and occupation to learn by heart and recite such already existing verses of other authors as had become popular; whilst at the same time they were so far poets themselves as not to scruple to alter, omit or add to, their originals in such kind and degree as they thought best for the time or circumstances of the actual recitation. The most celebrated of this second race of Rhapsodists were the *Homeridæ*, a name given to a class or family of them, which had its head-quarters in the island of Chios, and

* *Od.* viii. 266.

pretended to be the correctest reciters of the verses of Homer. Cynæthus, one of this family, migrated to Syracuse, and acquired great reputation by reciting in that city. His fame as a poet was so great that the Hymn to Apollo was attributed to him,* and it may be suspected that the well-known lines† in that poem, relative to the residence and person of Homer, are an instance of the fraud and the talent of him or of some other Chian Rhapsodist. Certain it is that during the age of this second race of Rhapsodists, that is to say, from an uncertain period about 800 or 900 B. C. to about 430 B. C. or in the interval, a great number of poets flourished, by whom it is reasonable to believe that much of the heroic poetry, now or anciently existing under various names, must have been composed. We are told of Arctinus the Milesian, author of the *Æthiopis*; of Lesches the Lesbian, author of the *Little Iliad*; of Stasinus the Cyprian, author of the *Cyprian Verses*; of Augias, author of the *Νόστοι* or *Returns of the Grecian Chiefs from Troy*; of Pisan-der the Rhodian, author of the *Heraclea*. Subsequently, for the most part, to these, the names of Archilochus, Terpander, Alcman, Alcæus, and Sappho, are conspicuous; and in the times

* Scho. Pind. Nem. Od. II.

† Hymn. App. v. 172.

Τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἰκεῖ δὲ Χίω ἐνὶ πειπταλώσσει.

“The blind old man of Scio’s rocky Isle.”—Byron.

of Pisistratus and his sons we have clear evidence of the names and the talents of Stesichorus, Ibycus, Anacreon, and Simonides.

Here I must notice the manner of the introduction of the Homeric Poems into Greece. Two stories are told.

I. First, it is said that Lycurgus, the Spartan Legislator, fell in with the poems of Homer during his travels in Asia, and, being charmed with them, carried them with him by some means and in some shape or other back to his native city. The authority for this is a passage of a fragment of Heraclides Ponticus,* in which he says that Lycurgus "having procured the poetry of Homer from the descendants of Creophylus, first introduced it into Peloponnesus." Ælian† repeats this with advantage; "Lycurgus, the Spartan, first carried the poetry of Homer *in a mass* into Greece." Plutarch‡ finishes off the story in his usual manner; "There (in Asia) Lycurgus first fell in with the poems of Homer,

Introduc-
tion of
Homeric
Poems into
Greece.

* In fragm. Πολιτειῶν.—τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν παρὰ τῶν ἀπογόνων Κρεοφύλου λαβὼν, πρῶτος διεκόμισεν εἰς Πελοπόννησον.

† Λυκούργος ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιος ἀθρόαν πρῶτος εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐκόμισα τὴν Ὀμήρου ποίησιν.—V. H. xiii. 14.

‡ Ἐκεῖ δὲ καὶ τοῖς Ὀμήρου ποιήμασιν ἐντυχὼν πρῶτον, ὡς ἔοικε, παρὰ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τοῖς Κλεοφύλου (sic) διατηρουμένοις, καὶ — ἰγρὰ ψατο προθύμως, καὶ συνήγαγεν ὡς δεῦρο κομιῶν. ἦν γάρ τις ἴδη δόξα τῶν ἐπὶ τῶν ἀμαυρὰ παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν. ἐκέκτηντο δὲ οὐ πολλοὶ μέρη τινὰ σποράδην τῆς ποιήσεως ὡς ἔτυχε διαφερομένης. γνωρίμην δὲ αὐτὴν καὶ μάλιστα πρῶτος ἐποίησε Λυκούργος.—Vit. Lycurgi.

probably in the keeping of the descendants of Cleophylus; he *wrote* them out eagerly, and collected them together for the purpose of bringing them hither into Greece; for there was already at that time an obscure rumor of these verses amongst the Greeks, but some few only possessed some scattered fragments of this poetry, which was circulated in a chance manner. Lycurgus had the principal hand in making it known." This Creophylus or Cleophylus, a Samian, is said to have been Homer's host in Samos, and a poet himself. The nucleus of fact in this story may probably consist in this; that Lycurgus became more acquainted with the Homeric verses amongst the Ionian Rhapsodists, and succeeded in introducing by means of his own or others' memory some connected portions of them into Western Greece. That he *wrote* them all out is, as we may see, so far as the original authority goes, due to the ingenious biographer alone.

Collection
by Pisistratus.

But the better founded account of the introduction, or, at least, of the formal collection of the Homeric Verses, though not inconsistent with the other, is, that after Solon had directed that the Rhapsodists should upon public occasions recite in a certain order of poetical narration, and not confusedly, the end before the beginning, as had been the previous practice, Pisistratus, with the help of a large body of the most celebrated poets

of his age, made a regular collection of the different Rhapsodies which passed under Homer's name, committed them all to writing, and arranged them very much in the *series* in which we now possess them. The division of the Rhapsodies into books corresponding with the letters of the Greek alphabet, was probably the work of the Alexandrian critics many centuries afterwards. Now the authorities for attributing this primary reduction into form to Pisistratus are numerous and express, and a few quotations from them will be the most satisfactory way of putting the student in possession of the opinions of the ancients upon the subject. "Who," says Cicero,* "was more learned in that age, or whose eloquence is reported to have been more accomplished by literature than that of Pisistratus, who is said first to have disposed the books of Homer, which were before confused, in the order in which we now have them?" Pausanias†—"Pisistratus collected the verses of Homer which were dispersed and retained in different places by memory." Ælian‡—"Afterwards Pisistratus, having collected the verses, set out the Iliad and Odyssey." Libanius§—"We praise Pisistratus for his collection of the verses made by Homer." Eustathius||—"The

* De Orat. Lib. III. 34. † Lib. VII. 26, p. 594.

‡ V. H. xiii. 14.

§ Pan. in Jul. tom. i. p. 170. Reiske.

|| Wolfe, Proleg. 33, n.

poetry of the *Iliad* is one continuous body throughout, and well fitted together; but they who put it together under the direction, as it is said, of Pisistratus, &c." An anonymous author in Allatius*—"Pisistratus, the Athenian, arranged in order his (Homer's) genuine poems, which had been previously sung in a scattered state." The Scholiast†—"It is said that the poems of Homer were collected or tacked together by Pisistratus, and that those verses which were before read in a dispersed and desultory order were put in series, their collocation having been disjointed by time." And there is much more testimony to the same point, which it is unnecessary to adduce.

That this collection was made with the assistance, and probably by the principal operation of the contemporary poets, rests also upon good authority. Pausanias,‡ in speaking of v. 573 in the second book of the *Iliad*, says—"That Pisistratus, or some one of his associates, had changed the name through ignorance." Suidas§—"Afterwards this poetry was put together and in order by many persons, and, in particular, by Pisistratus." The great poets with whom Pisistratus lived in friendship, and of whose aid he is supposed to have availed himself on this occasion, were Orpheus of Crotona, said to be the author

* Wolfe, Proleg. 33, n.

† Wolfe, *ibid.*

‡ Wolfe, *ibid.*

§ In voce "*Ὀρφεος*."

of the Argonautics, Onomacritus the Athenian, Simonides and Anacreon.

In the dialogue called Hipparchus,* attributed to Plato, it is said, indeed, of the younger son of Pisistratus of that name, "that he executed many other excellent works, and particularly he first brought the verses of Homer into this country, and compelled the Rhapsodists at the Panathenaic festival to go through them all in order, one taking up the other, in the same manner as they do now." There seems, however, no great inconsistency in these statements. They may very reasonably be reconciled by supposing that this great work of collecting and arranging the scattered verses of the Homeric Rhapsodists was begun in an imperfect manner by Solon, principally executed by Pisistratus and his friends, and finished under Hipparchus. This will embrace about eighty years from the date of Solon's law, B. C. 594, to the death of Hipparchus, B. C. 513.

It must be remembered, however, that, although the Homeric Rhapsodies were undoubtedly committed to writing, and reduced into a certain form and order of composition, in the age of the Pisistratidæ, the ancient and national practice of recitation still continued in honor, and for a considerable time afterwards was, perhaps, the only mode by which those poems were popularly known.

Rhapsodists.

* Plat. Hipparch.

But it may readily be believed that in proportion as written copies became multiplied, a power of, and taste for, reading generated, and a literature, in the narrow sense of the word, created, this practice of publicly reciting national poetry, which was as congenial, as it was indispensable, to a primitive and unlettered people, would gradually sink in estimation, become degraded in character, and finally fall into complete disuse. This we find to have been precisely the case from about the year B. C. 430, till the age of the Alexandrian Critics, under the polite and civilized government of the Ptolemies. The old manner of reciting was no doubt very histrionic, but after the formation of a regular theatre, and the composition of formal dramas, in the time of Æschylus, the heroic verses of the Homeric age must have seemed very unfit vehicles of, or accompaniments to, scenic effect of any kind. In this interval, therefore, I place a third and last race of Rhapsodists, now no longer the fellow poets and congenial interpreters of their originals, but in general a low and ignorant sort of men, who were acceptable only to the meanest of the people. Xenophon * and Plato † bear abundant testimony to the contempt with which they were regarded, though the object of the latter in the Ion or Ionian was probably to sketch

* Sympos. 3.

† Ion, passim.

a true and exalted picture of the duty and the character of a genuine Rhapsodist.

Upon the whole, therefore, it being quite clear Summary.
that the Iliad assumed substantially its present shape in the age of Pisistratus, there are ~~three~~ distinct points of view in which this collection may be placed:—1. That Homer wrote the Iliad in its present form—that by means of the desultory recitations of parts only by the itinerant Rhapsodists, its original unity of form was lost in Western Greece—and that Pisistratus and his son did no more than collect all these parts and re-arrange them in their primitive order:—2. That Homer wrote the existing verses constituting the Iliad in such short songs or rhapsodies as he, himself an itinerant rhapsodist, could sing or recite separately, and that these songs were *for the first time* put into one body, and disposed in their Epic form, by Pisistratus, as aforesaid:—3. That *several* rhapsodists originally composed the songs out of which, or with which, the Iliad as a Poem was compiled.* The first of these is the common opinion, and is asserted with great ingenuity and learning by Mr. Granville Penn, in his “Primary Argument of the Iliad;” the second is Wolfe’s and

* There would be no great difficulty in composing a complete epic poem with as much symmetry of parts as is seen in the Iliad, out of the Spanish Romances on the subject of the Cid’s Life and Adventures, or out of the English Ballads on Robin Hood and his companions.

Bentley's; the last is Heyne's, and was, I believe, the opinion of the late Dr. Parr, and is, I know, the firm conviction of one or two of the most eminent English poets and philosophers of the present day. I have no intention of saying more on this curious controversy than just to point out to the student that the fundamental difficulty which Wolfe and Heyne object to the common belief—that writing and writing materials were unknown in Greece in the Homeric age—has never been, and can never be, *proved*; and that when we consider the apparent familiarity of Homer with the Sidonian artisans, the long and strict alliance between the Sidonians and the Jews, and the indisputable possession and use of writing materials, of some sort or other, by the Hebrew people long before either of the dates of the Trojan war, the balance of probability seems to be on the other side.

Editions.

There were, however, many editions, or Διορθώσεις, as they were called, of the Iliad after this primary one by the Pisistratidæ. We read of one by Antimachus, a poet of Colophon; and of another very celebrated one by Aristotle, which edition Alexander is said to have himself corrected and kept in a very precious casket taken amongst the spoils of the camp of Darius. This edition was called ἡ ἐκ τοῦ νάρθηκος. These editions by any known individual were called αἱ κατ' ἄνδρα το

distinguish them from several editions existing in different cities, but not attributed to any particular editors. These latter were called *αἱ κατὰ πόλεις*, or *αἱ ἐκ πόλεων*. The Massiliotic, Chian, Argive, Sinopic, Cyprian and Cretan are mentioned. There are three other names very conspicuous amongst the multitude of critics, and commentators, and editors of the Iliad in subsequent times; these are Zenodotus, Aristophanes, the inventor of accents, and Aristarchus. This last celebrated man lived in the reign of Ptolemy Philometor, B. C. 150, and, after a collation of all the copies then existing, he published a new edition, or *Διόρθωσις*, of the Iliad, divided into books, the text of which, according to the general opinion of critics, has finally prevailed as the genuine diction of Homer.

I cannot conclude this slight notice of the history of the preservation of the Iliad, and of the different opinions which have been expressed as to the origin of that poem, without warmly recommending to the student the perusal of Wolfe's profound and ingenious Prolegomena, not only as containing a complete account of all that can be now discovered with respect to the Homeric Poems, but also as exhibiting a concise yet masterly sketch of the character, divisions and stages of the ancient Criticism. Heyne's Excursus, at the

Wolfe,
Heyne,
Knight.

end of the Iliad, are likewise extremely interesting, and full of various and useful information. Mr. R. P. Knight's Prolegomena present a great deal of matter in a small space, and should be read as being a kind of judgment on the theories of Wolfe and Heyne by an eminent, though rather eccentric, scholar.

LIFE OF HOMER.



It is said by Tatian* that Theagenes of Rhegium, Lives of
Homer. in the time of Cambyses, Stesimbrotus the Thasian, Antimachus the Colophonian, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, Dionysius the Olynthian, Ephorus of Cumæ, Philochorus the Athenian, Metaclides and Chamæleon the Peripatetics, and Zenodotus, Aristophanes, Callimachus, Crates, Eratosthenes, Aristarchus and Apollodorus, the Grammarians, all wrote concerning the poetry, the birth and the age of Homer. Of the works of all these authors, nothing now remains with the nominal exception of a Life of Homer, attributed to Herodotus, but which, as well on account of its minute and fabulous details as of the inconsistency† of a statement in it with the undoubted language of Herodotus,

* Fabric. Lib. II. c. 1, s. 3.

† In the Life it is said, that Homer lived 622 years before the invasion of Greece by Xerxes; whereas Herodotus expressly records his opinion that he lived no more than 400 years before his own (Herodotus's) time. *Ἡρόδοτος γὰρ καὶ "Ὁμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτεσι θοκίῳ μιν πρεσβυτέρους γενέσθαι, καὶ οὐ πλείοσι.*—Euterpi. s. 53.

is now almost universally considered as spurious. Such as it is, however, it is a very ancient compilation, and the text from which all subsequent stories have been taken or altered. There is a short Life of Homer, also, bearing the name of Plutarch, but which is, like the former, generally condemned as a forgery—a forgery, however, of this unusual nature, that there is reason to believe it more ancient* than its supposed author.

It may well seem preposterous to write the life of a man, whose very individual existence some of the greatest scholars of modern days have denied, and concerning whom it is clear that even Herodotus, the most ancient of the Greek historians, could only conjecture that he lived 400 years before his own time. Indeed I believe there is but one historical *fact* in either of these two Lives, and that is, that Homer, or whoever was the author, or, according to Heyne, whoever were the authors, of the Iliad, was, or were, born and bred in Asiatic Greece. Of this there is plenty of good evidence in the Iliad itself, and beyond this every thing seems as merely fabulous as the popular stories of King Arthur. However, some account of the common traditions about Homer

* Quinctilian, Lib. X. 1, and Seneca, Ep. 88, both more ancient than Plutarch, seem clearly aware of this Life of Homer. I particularly recommend the perusal of the whole of this first section of the tenth book of Quinctilian to the young scholar.

will probably be looked for here, and the story will explain the origin of several epithets which are frequently applied to him, and the meaning of many allusions to be met with in the Greek and Latin writers.

There is then a general agreement that the name of Homer's mother was Critheis; but the accounts differ a good deal as to his father. Parentage. Ephorus* says that there were three brothers, natives of Cumæ, Atelles, Mæon and Dius; that Dius, being in debt, migrated to Ascræ in Bœotia, and there became the father of Hesiod by his wife Pycimede; that Atelles died in Cumæ, having appointed his brother Mæon guardian of his daughter Critheis; that Critheis becoming with child by her uncle, was given in marriage to Phe-mius, a native of Smyrna, and a school-master in that city; and that in due time afterwards, whilst she was in or near the baths on the river Meles, she gave birth to a child, who was called Melesigenes from this circumstance. Aristotle† relates that a young woman of the island of Io, being with child by a Dæmon or Genius—a familiar of the Muses—fled to the coast, where she was seized by pirates, who presented her as a gift to Mæon, King of the Lydians, at that time resident in, and ruler over, Smyrna. Mæon married her; she, Critheis, gave birth to Melesigenes, as

* Plutarch, V. H.

† Ibid.

before mentioned, and upon her death, soon after, Mæon brought up her child as his own. Here we have an origin of the two epithets or appellatives, Melesigenes and Mæonides.

Name.

Ephorus* says he was called Homer (Ὅμηρος) when he became blind—the Ionians so styling blind men because they were *followers* of a guide (Ὅμηρέων). Aristotle's† account is, that the Lydians being pressed by the Æolians, and resolving to abandon Smyrna, made a proclamation, that whoever wished to follow them should go out of the city, and that thereupon Melesigenes said he would *follow* or *accompany* them (ὁμηρεῖν); upon which he acquired the name of Homer. Another derivation of the name is from ὁ μὴ ὁρᾶν—one not *seeing*; as to which notion of his blindness, Paterculus says that whoever thinks Homer was born blind must needs be blind himself in all his senses. It was said also that he was so called from ὁ μῆρος (the thigh), because he had some mark on his thigh to denote his illegitimacy. In the *Life of Homer* by Proclus, the story is that the Poet was delivered up by the people of Smyrna to Chios as a *pledge* or *hostage* (ἑμνηρος) on the conclusion of a truce. The derivation that favors the theories both of Wolfe and Heyne is from ὁμοῦ εἶρεν—to *speak together*, or from ὁμηρεῖν to *assemble toge-*

* Plutarch, V. H.

† Ibid.

ther; but every one of these are mere conjectures, and some of them very unhappy ones.

The stories proceed in general to state that Homer himself became a schoolmaster and poet of great celebrity at Smyrna, and remained there till Mentès, a foreign merchant, induced him to travel. That the author or authors of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* must have travelled pretty extensively for those times, is unquestionable; for besides the accurate knowledge of Greece Proper displayed in the Catalogue, it is clear that the Poet had a familiar acquaintance with the islands both in the *Ægean* and the *Ionian seas*,* the coasts of *Asia Minor* from the *Hellespont* indefinitely southward, *Crete*, *Cyprus*, and *Egypt*; and possessed also distinct information with respect to *Libya*, *Æthiopia*, *Phœnicia*, *Caria*, and *Phrygia*. In his travels Homer visited *Ithaca*, and there became subject to a disease in his eyes, which after-

Travels and
death.

* The late Mr. Bryant was induced by the extreme particularity of the local descriptions of *Ithaca* in the *Odyssey*, to contend for that island's being the birth-place of Homer, and he imagined that the poet's own adventures are related under the name of those of *Ulysses*. But do these descriptions correspond with the actual face of the island? Can any one find the famous Cavern of the Nymphs? As to mere particularity of detail, Peter Wilkins and *Robinson Crusoe* cannot be surpassed.

It may be mentioned here that *Joshua Barnes* wrote a book to prove that *King Solomon* was the author of the *Iliad*; and that *Constantine Koliades* maintains that the *real* Homer was no other than *Ulysses* himself.

wards terminated in total blindness. From this island he is said to have gone to Italy and even to Spain; but there is no sign in either of the two poems of any knowledge westward of the Ionian Sea. Wherever he went, Homer recited his verses, which were universally admired, except at Smyrna, where he was a prophet in his own country. At Phocæa, a schoolmaster of the name of Thestorides, obtained from Homer a copy of his poetry, and then sailed to Chios and recited the Homeric verses as his own. Homer followed, was rescued by Glaucus, a goatherd, from the attack of his dogs,* and brought by him to Bolissus, a town in Chios, where he resided a long time, in the possession of wealth and a splendid reputation. Thestorides left the island upon Homer's arrival. According to Herodotus he died at Io, on his way to Athens, and was buried near the sea shore. Proclus says, he died in consequence of falling over a stone. Plutarch tells a very different story. He preserves two responses of an oracle to Homer, in both of which he was cautioned to beware of the young men's riddle, and relates that the Poet, being on his voyage to Thebes, to attend a musical or poetical contest at the feast of Saturn in that city, landed in the island of Io, and whilst

* An incident supposed to be recorded in that passage of the *Odyssey* (Ξ' . xiv. 29.) where Ulysses is in danger of being torn by the dogs at the porch of the house of Eumeus.

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who wrote B.C. 444, and is founded on the assumption that Homer must have lived before the return of the Heraclidæ into Peloponnesus, an event which took place within eighty years after the Trojan war. The Newtonian calculation is also adopted, which fixes the capture of Troy as low as B.C. 904. The argument is, that it is extremely improbable that Homer, so minute as he is in his descriptions of Greece, and so full of the histories of the reigning dynasties in its various districts, should never notice so very remarkable an occurrence as the almost total abolition of the kingly government throughout Greece, and the substitution of the republican form in its stead. Now this national revolution was coincident with, or immediately consequent on, the return of the descendants of Hercules. It is said also, that the Poet mentions the grandchildren of Æneas as reigning in Troy, in the Prophecy of Neptune in the *Iliad*,* and that in another speech† of Juno's

* Νῦν δὲ ἢν Αἰνείας βίη Τρώεσσιν ἀνάξει,
καὶ παῖδες παῖδων, τοὶ καὶ μετόπισθε γένωνται.

Il. γ'. xx. 308.

Then shall Æneas o'er the Trojans reign,
And children's children his great line maintain.

Almost the same words occur in the Hymn to Venus, v. 197, 198; and they destroy the very foundation of the Roman claim to Trojan descent through Virgil's hero. The Augustan poet, either on his own authority, or under shelter of an old reading of πάντεςσι for Τρώεσσι, writes—

Nunc domus Æneæ cunctis dominabitur oris,
Et nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis.

† Δ'. iv. 51-4.

he seems to intimate the insecure state of the chief existing dynasties of the race of Pelops; and it is inferred from this, that he flourished during the third generation, or upwards of sixty years after the destruction of Troy. Upon this argument Heyne* remarks, that in the first place a poet, who was celebrating heroes of the Pelopid race, had no occasion to notice a revolution by which their families were expatriated and their kingdoms abolished; and next, which seems an insurmountable objection, that the Ionic migration took place sixty years *later* than the return of the Heraclidæ, yet that Homer was an Ionian, and a resident in, or at least perfectly conversant with, Ionian Asia, is admitted on all hands and is indeed incontestable; and as he never notices this migration, though it was certainly a very remarkable event and one which he *must* have known, he may just as well for other or the same reasons have been silent on the subject of a revolution by which that migration was caused. The Arundelian Marble places Homer B. C. 907, the Ionian Migration B. C. 1044, the Return of the Heraclidæ B. C. 1104, and the Capture of Troy B. C. 1184. Heyne approves this calculation as, upon the whole, the most consistent with all the authorities: but it is at variance with Newton's chronology, and is

* Excurs. ad Il. Ω' . xxiv.

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Almost the same words occur in the Hymn to Venus, v. 197, 198; and they destroy the very foundation of the Roman claim to Trojan descent through Virgil's hero. The Augustan poet, either on his own authority, or under shelter of an old reading of πάντεςσι for Τρώεσσι, writes—

Nunc domus Æneæ cunctis dominabitur oris,
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he seems to intimate the insecure state of the chief existing dynasties of the race of Pelops; and it is inferred from this, that he flourished during the third generation, or upwards of sixty years after the destruction of Troy. Upon this argument Heyne* remarks, that in the first place a poet, who was celebrating heroes of the Pelopid race, had no occasion to notice a revolution by which their families were expatriated and their kingdoms abolished; and next, which seems an insurmountable objection, that the Ionic migration took place sixty years *later* than the return of the Heraclidæ, yet that Homer was an Ionian, and a resident in, or at least perfectly conversant with, Ionian Asia, is admitted on all hands and is indeed incontestable; and as he never notices this migration, though it was certainly a very remarkable event and one which he *must* have known, he may just as well for other or the same reasons have been silent on the subject of a revolution by which that migration was caused. The Arundelian Marble places Homer B. C. 907, the Ionian Migration B. C. 1044, the Return of the Heraclidæ B. C. 1104, and the Capture of Troy B. C. 1184. Heyne approves this calculation as, upon the whole, the most consistent with all the authorities: but it is at variance with Newton's chronology, and is

* Excurs. ad Il. Ω' . xxiv.

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Reputation. The vicissitudes to which Homer's reputation and influence have been subject deserve notice. From the first known collection of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the time of the Pisistratidæ to the promulgation of Christianity, the love and reverence with which the name of Homer was regarded, went on constantly increasing, till at last public games were instituted in his honor, statues dedicated, temples erected, and sacrifices offered to him as a divinity. There were such temples at Smyrna,* Chios, and Alexandria; and according to Ælian,† the Argives sacrificed to, and invoked, the names and presence of Apollo and Homer together.

But about the beginning of the second century of the Christian era, when the struggle between the old and the new religions was warm and active, the tide turned. "Heathenism," says Pope,‡ "was then to be destroyed, and Homer appeared the father of it, whose fictions were at once the belief of the Pagan religion, and the objections of Christianity against it. He became therefore deeply involved in the question, and not with that honor which hitherto attended him, but as a cri-

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It may well seem preposterous to write the life of a man, whose very individual existence some of the greatest scholars of modern days have denied, and concerning whom it is clear that even Herodotus, the most ancient of the Greek historians, could only conjecture that he lived 400 years before his own time. Indeed I believe there is but one historical *fact* in either of these two Lives, and that is, that Homer, or whoever was the author, or, according to Heyne, whoever were the authors, of the Iliad, was, or were, born and bred in Asiatic Greece. Of this there is plenty of good evidence in the Iliad itself, and beyond this every thing seems as merely fabulous as the popular stories of King Arthur. However, some account of the common traditions about Homer

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INTRODUCTION

TO

THE ILIAD.



It may perhaps be confidently said that the Iliad is, with the exception of the Pentateuch and some other books of the Old Testament, the most ancient composition known. There seems to be good proof that it is older than the Odyssey, older than Hesiod, and older than the Epical and other Poems which have been ascribed to Orpheus and Musæus, and which were probably, for the most part, produced during the interval between the Homeric age and the dynasty of Pisistratus; an interval of which we can learn little from history, and the obscurity of which seems in some sort to be aggravated by contrast with the light with which it is bounded. The splendor of Homer is at the beginning and the end of this interval, and the two bright points of the composition and the collective publication of the Iliad define, but they do not measure, the length, the depth, or the breadth of the historic darkness between them.

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wards terminated in total blindness. From this island he is said to have gone to Italy and even to Spain; but there is no sign in either of the two poems of any knowledge westward of the Ionian Sea. Wherever he went, Homer recited his verses, which were universally admired, except at Smyrna, where he was a prophet in his own country. At Phocæa, a schoolmaster of the name of Thestorides, obtained from Homer a copy of his poetry, and then sailed to Chios and recited the Homeric verses as his own. Homer followed, was rescued by Glaucus, a goatherd, from the attack of his dogs,* and brought by him to Bolissus, a town in Chios, where he resided a long time, in the possession of wealth and a splendid reputation. Thestorides left the island upon Homer's arrival. According to Herodotus he died at Io, on his way to Athens, and was buried near the sea shore. Proclus says, he died in consequence of falling over a stone. Plutarch tells a very different story. He preserves two responses of an oracle to Homer, in both of which he was cautioned to beware of the young men's riddle, and relates that the Poet, being on his voyage to Thebes, to attend a musical or poetical contest at the feast of Saturn in that city, landed in the island of Io, and whilst

* An incident supposed to be recorded in that passage of the *Odyssey* (Ξ' . xiv. 29.) where Ulysses is in danger of being torn by the dogs at the porch of the house of Eumeus.

fall between the feet of its mother;* Hector sacrificed to Jupiter on the summit of Ida;† stoning seems to have been the Trojan punishment for adultery;‡ oxen are used to tread out corn;§ female captives are selected as the peculiar prizes of the generals and chiefs;|| and to lie without burial was the last and worst aggravation of defeat and death.¶ Instances of this sort might be multiplied to any extent, but the student will find it a pleasing and useful task to discover them for himself; and these will amply suffice to demonstrate the existence of that correspondence of spirit and manners between the Homeric and the early ages of the Bible history to which I have adverted. It is real and important; it affords a standard of the feelings with which we ought to read the Iliad, if we mean to read it as it deserves, and it explains and sets in the true point of view numberless passages, which the ignorance or frivolity of after-times has charged with obscurity, meanness, or error. The Old Testament and the Iliad reflect light mutually, each on the other; and both in respect of poetry and of morals,** it

* γ'. xix. 110. — Deuteronomy, xxviii. 57.

† κ'. xxii. 170. — Deuteronomy, xii. 2.

‡ ρ'. iii. 57. — John, viii. 5.

§ ρ'. xx. 495. — Deuteronomy, xxv. 4.

|| Α'. i. 118. — Judges, v. 30.

¶ Α'. i. 4. — Deuteronomy, xxviii. 26.

** "The whole of Homer's poetry is a praise of virtue; and every

who wrote B.C. 444, and is founded on the assumption that Homer must have lived before the return of the Heraclidæ into Peloponnesus, an event which took place within eighty years after the Trojan war. The Newtonian calculation is also adopted, which fixes the capture of Troy as low as B.C. 904. The argument is, that it is extremely improbable that Homer, so minute as he is in his descriptions of Greece, and so full of the histories of the reigning dynasties in its various districts, should never notice so very remarkable an occurrence as the almost total abolition of the kingly government throughout Greece, and the substitution of the republican form in its stead. Now this national revolution was coincident with, or immediately consequent on, the return of the descendants of Hercules. It is said also, that the Poet mentions the grandchildren of Æneas as reigning in Troy, in the Prophecy of Neptune in the *Iliad*,* and that in another speech† of Juno's

* *Nūn δὲ ἢν Αἰνείας βίη Τρώεσσιν ἀνάξει,
καὶ παῖδες παῖδων, τοὶ κεν μετόπισθε γένωνται.*

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Then shall Æneas o'er the Trojans reign,
And children's children his great line maintain.

Almost the same words occur in the Hymn to Venus, v. 197, 198; and they destroy the very foundation of the Roman claim to Trojan descent through Virgil's hero. The Augustan poet, either on his own authority, or under shelter of an old reading of πάντεςσι for Τρώεσσιν, writes—

*Nunc domus Æneæ cunctis dominabitur oris,
Et nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis.*

† *Δ'. iv. 51-4.*

he seems to intimate the insecure state of the chief existing dynasties of the race of Pelops; and it is inferred from this, that he flourished during the third generation, or upwards of sixty years after the destruction of Troy. Upon this argument Heyne* remarks, that in the first place a poet, who was celebrating heroes of the Pelopid race, had no occasion to notice a revolution by which their families were expatriated and their kingdoms abolished; and next, which seems an insurmountable objection, that the Ionic migration took place sixty years *later* than the return of the Heraclidæ, yet that Homer was an Ionian, and a resident in, or at least perfectly conversant with, Ionian Asia, is admitted on all hands and is indeed incontestable; and as he never notices this migration, though it was certainly a very remarkable event and one which he *must* have known, he may just as well for other or the same reasons have been silent on the subject of a revolution by which that migration was caused. The Arundelian Marble places Homer B. C. 907, the Ionian Migration B. C. 1044, the Return of the Heraclidæ B. C. 1104, and the Capture of Troy B. C. 1184. Heyne approves this calculation as, upon the whole, the most consistent with all the authorities: but it is at variance with Newton's chronology, and is

* Excurs. ad Il. *Ω'*. xxiv.

therefore a calculation, of the exactness of which we can never feel confident.

Reputation. The vicissitudes to which Homer's reputation and influence have been subject deserve notice. From the first known collection of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the time of the Pisistratidæ to the promulgation of Christianity, the love and reverence with which the name of Homer was regarded, went on constantly increasing, till at last public games were instituted in his honor, statues dedicated, temples erected, and sacrifices offered to him as a divinity. There were such temples at Smyrna,* Chios, and Alexandria; and according to Ælian,† the Argives sacrificed to, and invoked, the names and presence of Apollo and Homer together.

But about the beginning of the second century of the Christian era, when the struggle between the old and the new religions was warm and active, the tide turned. "Heathenism," says Pope,‡ "was then to be destroyed, and Homer appeared the father of it, whose fictions were at once the belief of the Pagan religion, and the objections of Christianity against it. He became therefore deeply involved in the question, and not with that honor which hitherto attended him, but as a cri-

* Cic. pro Archia.

† Lib. ix. c. 15.

‡ Essay on Homer.

minal who had drawn the world into folly. He was on the one hand* accused for having framed fables upon the works of Moses—as the rebellion of the Giants from the building of Babel, and the casting of Ate or Strife out of Heaven from the fall of Lucifer. He was exposed on the other hand for those which he is said to invent, as when Arnobius† cries out, “This is the man who wounded your Venus, imprisoned your Mars, who freed even your Jupiter by Briareus, and who finds authorities for all your vices,” &c. Mankind was derided‡ for whatever he had hitherto made them believe; and Plato,§ who expelled him his Commonwealth, has of all the Philosophers found the best quarter from the Fathers for passing that sentence. His finest beauties began to take a new appearance of pernicious qualities; and because they might be considered as allurements to Fancy, or supports to those errors with which they were mingled, they were to be depreciated, while the contest of Faith was in being. It was hence, that the reading of them was discouraged, that we hear Rufinus accusing St. Jerome for it, and that St. Austin|| rejects him as the grand master of Fable; though indeed

* Just. Mart. Admon. ad Gentes.

† Advers. Gentes, lib. vii. ‡ Tertull. Apol. c. 14.

§ Arnobius, *ibid.* Eusebius præp. evangel. lib. xiv. c. 10.

|| Confess. lib. i. c. 14.

is now almost universally considered as spurious. Such as it is, however, it is a very ancient compilation, and the text from which all subsequent stories have been taken or altered. There is a short Life of Homer, also, bearing the name of Plutarch, but which is, like the former, generally condemned as a forgery—a forgery, however, of this unusual nature, that there is reason to believe it more ancient* than its supposed author.

It may well seem preposterous to write the life of a man, whose very individual existence some of the greatest scholars of modern days have denied, and concerning whom it is clear that even Herodotus, the most ancient of the Greek historians, could only conjecture that he lived 400 years before his own time. Indeed I believe there is but one historical *fact* in either of these two Lives, and that is, that Homer, or whoever was the author, or, according to Heyne, whoever were the authors, of the Iliad, was, or were, born and bred in Asiatic Greece. Of this there is plenty of good evidence in the Iliad itself, and beyond this every thing seems as merely fabulous as the popular stories of King Arthur. However, some account of the common traditions about Homer

* Quintilian, Lib. X. 1, and Seneca, Ep. 88, both more ancient than Plutarch, seem clearly aware of this Life of Homer. I particularly recommend the perusal of the whole of this first section of the tenth book of Quintilian to the young scholar.

will probably be looked for here, and the story will explain the origin of several epithets which are frequently applied to him, and the meaning of many allusions to be met with in the Greek and Latin writers.

There is then a general agreement that the name of Homer's mother was Critheis; but the accounts differ a good deal as to his father. Parentage. Ephorus* says that there were three brothers, natives of Cumæ, Atelles, Mæon and Dius; that Dius, being in debt, migrated to Ascra in Bœotia, and there became the father of Hesiod by his wife Pycimede; that Atelles died in Cumæ, having appointed his brother Mæon guardian of his daughter Critheis; that Critheis becoming with child by her uncle, was given in marriage to Phe-mius, a native of Smyrna, and a school-master in that city; and that in due time afterwards, whilst she was in or near the baths on the river Meles, she gave birth to a child, who was called Melesigenes from this circumstance. Aristotle† relates that a young woman of the island of Io, being with child by a Dæmon or Genius—a familiar of the Muses—fled to the coast, where she was seized by pirates, who presented her as a gift to Mæon, King of the Lydians, at that time resident in, and ruler over, Smyrna. Mæon married her; she, Critheis, gave birth to Melesigenes, as

* Plutarch, V. H.

† Ibid.

before mentioned, and upon her death, soon after, Mæon brought up her child as his own. Here we have an origin of the two epithets or appellatives, Melesigenes and Mæonides.

Name.

Ephorus* says he was called Homer (Ὅμηρος) when he became blind—the Ionians so styling blind men because they were *followers* of a guide (Ὅμηρέων). Aristotle's† account is, that the Lydians being pressed by the Æolians, and resolving to abandon Smyrna, made a proclamation, that whoever wished to follow them should go out of the city, and that thereupon Melesigenes said he would *follow* or *accompany* them (ὁμηρεῖν); upon which he acquired the name of Homer. Another derivation of the name is from ὁ μὴ ὁρᾶν—one *not seeing*; as to which notion of his blindness, Paterculus says that whoever thinks Homer was born blind must needs be blind himself in all his senses. It was said also that he was so called from ὁ μῆρος (the thigh), because he had some mark on his thigh to denote his illegitimacy. In the Life of Homer by Proclus, the story is that the Poet was delivered up by the people of Smyrna to Chios as a *pledge* or *hostage* (ὄμηρος) on the conclusion of a truce. The derivation that favors the theories both of Wolfe and Heyne is from ὁμοῦ εἶρειν—to *speak together*, or from ὁμηρεῖν to *assemble toge-*

* Plutarch, V. H.

† Ibid.

ther; but every one of these are mere conjectures, and some of them very unhappy ones.

The stories proceed in general to state that Homer himself became a schoolmaster and poet of great celebrity at Smyrna, and remained there till Mentès, a foreign merchant, induced him to travel. That the author or authors of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* must have travelled pretty extensively for those times, is unquestionable; for besides the accurate knowledge of Greece Proper displayed in the Catalogue, it is clear that the Poet had a familiar acquaintance with the islands both in the *Ægean* and the *Ionian* seas,* the coasts of *Asia Minor* from the *Hellespont* indefinitely southward, *Crete*, *Cyprus*, and *Egypt*; and possessed also distinct information with respect to *Libya*, *Æthiopia*, *Phœnicia*, *Caria*, and *Phrygia*. In his travels Homer visited *Ithaca*, and there became subject to a disease in his eyes, which after-
Travels and death.

* The late Mr. Bryant was induced by the extreme particularity of the local descriptions of *Ithaca* in the *Odyssey*, to contend for that island's being the birth-place of Homer, and he imagined that the poet's own adventures are related under the name of those of *Ulysses*. But do these descriptions correspond with the actual face of the island? Can any one find the famous Cavern of the Nymphs? As to mere particularity of detail, *Peter Wilkins* and *Robinson Crusoe* cannot be surpassed.

It may be mentioned here that *Joshua Barnes* wrote a book to prove that *King Solomon* was the author of the *Iliad*; and that *Constantine Koliades* maintains that the *real* Homer was no other than *Ulysses* himself.

The Anger of Achilles seems to be proposed by the Poet himself as the subject of his Poem; but then, it is said,* all that follows after the reconciliation with Agamemnon would appear to be an excess or appendix, like the fifth act of the Merchant of Venice or of Henry the Eighth; and it has therefore been argued that the *Διὸς βουλή* or Will of Jupiter in working the death and burial of Hector, by the instrumentality of Achilles, as an immediate preliminary to the destruction of Troy, is the true subject laid down by Homer and intended by Aristotle. According to which theory the *procemium* of the poem is read in the

Harpalion, son of Pylæmenes, is killed by Meriones, and the said Pylæmenes, in *propria personâ* and ailing nothing material, accompanies the body of his son to Troy, and sheds tears of sorrow at his loss :—

μετὰ δὲ σφι πατὴρ κίε, δάκρυα λείβων.

In the κ'. x. Diomed and Ulysses meet a man in the dark, whom they stop and question. The man's name is never mentioned in the conversation; yet at v. 447 Diomed all at once calls him by his right name :—

Μὴ δὴ μοι φύξιν γέ, Δόλων, ἐμβάλλεο θυμῷ.

Think not, O Dolon, thou canst now escape.

In the Σ', xviii. 192, Achilles says that the armour of none of the chieftains will suit him, excepting the shield of Ajax. How was it then that the armour of Achilles fitted Patroclus? It would seem a consequence that the armour of Patroclus in return might have fitted Achilles, although to be sure it is possible that the son of Peleus may have reasoned with respect to his armour fitting Patroclus as the Calender at Ware did touching his own wig and John Gilpin's head :—

“ My head is twice as big as yours,
It therefore needs must fit.”

* Primary Argument, &c.

following manner: "Sing, O Goddess, the destructive resentment of Achilles the son of Peleus, which caused infinite sorrows to the Greeks, and sent many illustrious souls of Heroes to Hades, and made their bodies a prey to dogs and all kinds of birds; *and the Will of Jupiter was accomplishing itself from the time when* the son of Atreus, King of Men, and the noble Achilles first separated after having quarrelled."* Now although this were the true interpretation of the passage, (than which, however, any thing more harsh or foreign to the obvious construction cannot be conceived,) the subject of the Song should certainly seem naturally to be that which the Muse is invoked to sing—the destructive resentment of Achilles:—

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
Οὐλομένην——.†

Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumbered, heavenly Goddess sing.—*Pope.*

The Will of Jupiter may have been involved in, and accomplished by, the existence and effects of this Resentment, as by any other of the primary occurrences of the war; but surely this eventual accomplishment of Fate never presents itself as the immediate subject of this Poem. Indeed the theory in question takes the last two lines and a half of the proœmium out of the invocation alto-

* A'. i. 1-7.

† A'. i. 1-2.

who wrote B.C. 444, and is founded on the assumption that Homer must have lived before the return of the Heraclidæ into Peloponnesus, an event which took place within eighty years after the Trojan war. The Newtonian calculation is also adopted, which fixes the capture of Troy as low as B.C. 904. The argument is, that it is extremely improbable that Homer, so minute as he is in his descriptions of Greece, and so full of the histories of the reigning dynasties in its various districts, should never notice so very remarkable an occurrence as the almost total abolition of the kingly government throughout Greece, and the substitution of the republican form in its stead. Now this national revolution was coincident with, or immediately consequent on, the return of the descendants of Hercules. It is said also, that the Poet mentions the grandchildren of Æneas as reigning in Troy, in the Prophecy of Neptune in the *Iliad*,* and that in another speech† of Juno's

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|| Confess. lib. i. c. 14.

Counts of Carrion, are the subject of the Poem; it is soon felt that such criticism would be out of place, and that the subject of the Poem and the object of the Poet were one and the same—an affectionate record of the various fortunes, the valorous heart, and the mighty arm of Don Rodrigo de Bivar.

A transcendant power of Imagination and an uncommon splendor of Language distinguish the *Iliad*, but do not render it different, from all other early national or heroic poetry, which is of a simple and natural composition, and partakes strongly of the character of historical narration; and he who will read this great Poem without prejudice and without comment cannot fail to perceive that its frame is essentially unlike that of the *Æneid* or the *Jerusalem Delivered*; that the rules and the plan before mentioned are inconsistent with the meaning of the poet; that his art is not the technical dexterity of the Critics, but the result of natural order; his symmetry a pervading passion, and not an elaborate collocation of parts. In fact the simplest conception of the plan of the *Iliad* is at the same time the most noble and the most accurate.*

* Blanthinus contended that by Jupiter in the *Iliad* is signified Arabia with Egypt, by Juno Syria, by Neptune Caria, and by Apollo Assyria or Babylon. Gerardus Cræsius, in his *Homerus Hebræus sive Historia Hebræorum ab Homero*, maintained that the history of the Israelites till their complete subjugation of Judæa is plainly nar-

But after all, the characteristic merit of the poetry of the Iliad is the important and interesting subject for consideration; and as to this, there is a vagueness in the general language of scholars which may perhaps be traced to the influence of the showy treatise of Longinus. From that has come the indiscriminate and often absurd use of the terms Sublime and Sublimity, by which a really appropriate criticism is almost rendered impossible. Where things are different, names should be different also. Poetical Sublimity seems specifically to consist in an expression of the Vast, the Obscure or the Terrible: of this the Apocalypse, the fearful vision of Eliphaz the Temanite,* and the 18th Psalm, v. 7—17, are

Character
of the Po-
etry.

rated in the two poems; that the Odyssey was written first, and embraces the time from the departure of Lot out of Sodom to the death of Moses, and that in the Iliad is contained the destruction of Jericho, together with the wars of Joshua and the conquest of Canaan.

Fabric. lib. ii. c. 6. s. 2.

Jacobus Hugo was of opinion that Homer under divine influence prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem under that of Troy; the life, miracles and passion of our Saviour, and the history of the Church under the Emperors in the Iliad. He thinks Homer secretly meant the Dutch by the Harpies, John Calvin by *Euenis*, Martin Luther by *Antinous* and *Isides*, and the Lutherans generally by the Lotophagi.

Fabric. lib. ii. c. 6. s. 15.

The Monk, in the *Gesta Romanorum*, says, "My beloved, Paris represents the Devil, Helen the human soul or all mankind. Troy is Hell; Ulysses is Christ, and Achilles the Holy Ghost."

Lib. ii. 310. Swan's Tr.

Talia sciat oportet qui multa vult scire.

* Job, iv. 13.

grand examples in each kind. But every splendid burst of the Imagination is not sublime in this sense: it may be noble or pathetic; it may be beautiful, or it may be simply delightful. Unless we thus distinguish, we shall find ourselves calling by the same name things unlike or even opposite to each other, and a vivid apprehension of the character of works of the Intellect will be impracticable. There are indeed very few long poems in which Sublimity is so predominant as to be characteristic; and it may be added, with great truth, that the most sublime productions of the human genius are not the most pleasing; for nothing will permanently captivate the heart of man which is above the sphere of his affections, and beyond the reach of his senses, and no poet was ever universally loved who did not oft, Antæus-like, renew his flagging strength by gentle restings on the bosom of his mother Earth. Homer and Shakspeare compared with Milton are illustrations of this truth. Homer was *universally* popular wherever Greek was spoken; Shakspeare is so now wherever English is known. Zoilus was a monster and a by-word, and no one would think it worth while to reason with an Englishman who should profess not to *like* Shakspeare. But out of the admirers of the Paradise Lost, what is the proportion of those who receive *pleasure* from it, or have even read that divine poem *through*?

The truth is, that there are not many passages in the *Iliad* which can be properly called sublime: the grandest of those few beyond comparison is the description of the universal horror and tumult attending on the Battle of the Gods;* whilst the real characteristics of the Poem are Truth, Good Sense, Rapidity and Variety, bodied forth into shape by a vivid Imagination, and borne on the musical wings of an inimitable Versification. It is the rare union and the harmonious operation of these inestimable qualities which make one of the longest poems known the most delightful and the most instructive; for who that has read the *Iliad* in youth, in manhood, or in old age, will deny it to be the Muses' purest and sweetest stream—one while foaming in fury, at another sleeping in sunshine, and again running a steady and a cheerful course—here gliding between bare and even banks, there over-arched by forest trees, or islanded with flowers which lie, like the water-lilies, on the bosom of the current? Where has an earthly Muse ever spoken such words of fire, or when has Verse ever rolled on in such unbroken and resistless power as in those two wonderful rhapsodies in which Hector bursts through the gates of the Greek fortifications,† and at last fights his way to the stern of Ajax' ship?‡ Where is there a pathos so deep and tender as in the interview

* T'. xx. 47—66.

† M'. xii.

‡ O'. xv. -

between Hector and Andromache,* or in the lamentations of Andromache and Helen over the corpse of the departed hero?† Where is there a picture so vivid and real as that of Achilles struggling in the surges of Scamander,‡ or a pause of such profound calm as while we listen to the speeches by night in the tent of Pelides,§ or gaze, one by one, on the marvels of his Vulcanian shield.||

In the old work entitled the "Contest of Homer and Hesiod," the story is, that the two poets were ordered, as a finishing trial of merit, to recite the most beautiful passage that each had, in his own opinion, composed, and that Homer selected the following lines, which, though not perhaps the grandest in point of imagination, are amongst the most spirited and lifesome in the Iliad. They are to be found in two separate parts of the Poem, but they run together very well.

Ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' Ἀϊάντας δαίονες ἵσταγτο φάλαγγες
καρτεραί, ἃς οὔτ' ἂν κεν Ἀρης ὀνόσαιτο μετελθὼν,
οὔτε κ' Ἀθηναίη λαοσπόος· οἱ γὰρ ἄριστοι
κρινθέντες Τρῳάς τε καὶ Ἑκτορα δῖον ἔμμνον,
φράξαντες δόρυ δουρὶ, σάκος σάκει προθελύμνῃ.
ἀσπίς ἄρ' ἀσπίδ' ἔρειδε, κόρυς κόρυν, ἀνέρα δ' ἀνὴρ·
ψαῦον δ' ἵπποκόμοι κόρυθες, λαμπροῖσι φάλοισι
νευόντων· ὥς πυκνοὶ ἐφέστασαν ἀλλήλοισιν.¶
ἔφριξεν δὲ μάχῃ φθισίμβροτος ἐγγχείησι
μακραίς, ἃς εἶχον ταμεσίχροας· ὅσσε δ' ἄμερδεν
αὐγὴ χαλκείη, κορύθων ἄπο λαμπομενάων,

* ζ'. vi. 320.

† Ω'. xxiv. 725—762.

‡ φ'. xxi. 233.

§ ι'. ix. 225.

|| Σ'. xviii. 478.

¶ Ν'. xiii. 126-33.

θωρήκων τὲ νεοσμήκτων, σακέων τὲ φαεινῶν,
 ἐρχομένων ἄμυδις· μάλα κὲν θρασυ κάρδιος εἶη,
 ὃς τότε γηθήσειεν ἰδὼν πόνον, οὐδ' ἀκάχοιτο.*

“Fix’d at his post was each bold Ajax found,
 With well-rang’d squadrons strongly circled round;
 So close their order, so disposed their fight,
 As Pallas’ self might view with fix’d delight;
 Or had the God of War inclined his eyes,
 The God of War had own’d a just surprise.
 A chosen Phalanx, firm, resolv’d as Fate,
 Descending Hector and his battle wait.
 An iron scene gleams dreadful o’er the fields,
 Armour in armour lock’d, and shields in shields;
 Spears lean on spears, on targets targets throng,
 Helms stuck to helms, and man drove man along.
 The floating plumes unnumber’d wave above—

* * * * *

All dreadful glow’d the iron face of War,
 Bristled with upright spears, that flock’d afar;
 Dire was the gleam of breastplates, helms and shields,
 And polish’d arms emblaz’d the flaming fields:
 Tremendous scene! that general horror gave,
 But touch’d with joy the bosoms of the brave.”—*Pope*.†

But I have little hesitation in pointing out another passage as unquestionably the most vigorous effort of the Imagination of Homer, in the peculiar sense of that term to which I have adverted in the Ge-

* N°. xiii. 339-44.

† I am very sensible of the inadequacy and incorrectness of this, and of many other of the translations contained in this work. I insert it for want of a better. Mr. Sotheby, whose rich and beautiful translation of the Oberon is known to every one, has published *some* specimens of a new translation of the Iliad, more faithful than Pope’s and more harmonious than Cowper’s.

neral Introduction. According to Eustathius, the ancient Critics marked these verses with an asterisk, to denote their transcendant beauty. They describe Minerva arming herself for the battle.

Αὐτὰρ Ἀθηναίη, κόρυη Διὸς Αἰγιόχοιο,
πέπλον μὲν κατέχευεν ἑανὸν πατρὸς ἐπ' οὐδὲι,
ποικίλον, ὃν ῥ' αὐτὴ ποιήσατο καὶ κάμε χερσίν·
ἡ δὲ, χιτῶν' ἐνδύσα Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο,
τεύχεσιν ἐς πόλεμον θωρήσσετο δακρυόεντα.
ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετ' Αἰγίδα θυσσανόεσσαν,
δεινὴν, ἣν περὶ μὲν πάντη Φόβος ἐστεφάνωτο·
ἐν δ' Ἔρις, ἐν δ' Ἀλκῇ, ἐν δὲ κρυόεσσα Ἰωκὴ·
ἐν δέ τε Γοργεῖη κεφαλῇ δεινοῖο πελώρου,
δεινὴ τε, σμερδνὴ τε, Διὸς τέρας Αἰγιόχοιο.
κρατὶ δ' ἐπ' ἀμφίφαλον κυνέην θέτο τετραφάλῃηρον,
χρυσείην, ἑκατὸν πόλεων πρυλέεσσ' ἀραρυῖαν.
ἐς δ' ὄχρεα φλόγεια ποσὶ βήσατο· λάζετο δ' ἔγχος
βριθῦ, μέγα, στιβαρόν, τῷ δάμνησι στίχας ἀνδρῶν
ἡρώων, τοῖσιν τε κοτέσσεται ὀβριμοπάτρη.
Ἥρη δὲ μάστιγι θοῶς ἐπεμαίετ' ἄρ' ἵππους.
αὐτόμαται δὲ πύλαι μύκον οὐρανοῦ, ἃς ἔχον Ὀφρυάχαι,
τῆς ἐπιτέτραπται μέγας οὐρανὸς, Οὐλύμπός τε,
ἡμὲν ἀνακλῖναι πυκινὸν νέφος, ἡδ' ἐπιθεῖναι.
τῇ ῥα δι' αὐτῶν κεντρηνέκεας ἔχον ἵππους·
εὖρον δὲ Κρονίωνα, θεῶν ἄτερ ἡμενον ἄλλων,
ἀκροτάτῃ κορυφῇ πολυδεираδος Οὐλύμποιο.*

“ Meantime, Minerva, progeny of Jove,
On the adamantine floor of his abode
Let fall, profuse, her variegated robe,
Labor of her own hands. She first put on
The corslet of the cloud-assembler God ;
Then arm'd her shoulder with the dreadful shield,

* E. v. 733-54.

The shaggy Ægis, border'd thick around
 With Terror;—there was Discord, Prowess there,
 There *hot* Pursuit, and there the feature grim
 Of Gorgon, dire Deformity, a sign
 Oft borne portentous on the arm of Jove.
 Her golden helm, whose concave had sufficed
 The legions of a hundred cities, rough
 With warlike ornament superb, she fix'd
 On her immortal head. Thus arm'd, she rose
 Into the flaming chariot, and her spear
 Seiz'd ponderous, huge, with which the Goddess sprung
 From an Almighty Father levels ranks
 Of Heroes, against whom her anger burns.
 Juno with lifted lash urged quick the steeds ;
 At her approach, spontaneous roared the wide
 Unfolding gates of Heaven—the heavenly gates
 Kept by the watchful Hours, to whom the charge
 Of the Olympian summit appertains,
 And of the boundless ether back to roll,
 And to replace the cloudy barrier dense.
 Spurred through the portal flew the rapid steeds :
 Apart from all, and seated on the point
 Superior of the cloven mount they found
 The Thunderer."

Cowper.

As an instance of the perfection of energetic brevity, the announcement by Antilochus to Achilles of the death and despoiling of Patroclus has been pointed out by Quintilian and many other critics.

Κεῖται Πάτροκλος νέκρος δὲ δὴ ἀμφιμάχονται
 γυμνοῦ ἀτὰρ τὰ γε τεύχε' ἔχει κορυθαίολος Ἑκτωρ.*

"Patroclus is no more. The Grecians fight
 For his bare corse, and Hector hath his arms."—*Cowper.*

* x. xviii. 20-1.

By a close study of Life and by a true and natural mode of expressing every thing, Homer was enabled to venture upon the most peculiar and difficult situations, and to extricate himself from them with the completest success. The whole scene between Achilles and Priam, when the latter comes to the Greek camp for the purpose of redeeming the body of Hector, is at once the most profoundly skilful, and yet the simplest and most affecting, passage in the Iliad. Quintilian has noticed the following speech of Priam; but it, as well as the lines immediately subsequent, defy all translation. There is *that* about the Greek which has no name, but which is of so fine and ethereal a subtilty that it can only be *felt* in the original, and is lost in an attempt to transfuse it into another language.

Μνησai πατρός σεῖο, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ,
 τηλίκου, ὥσπερ ἐγών, ὀλοῦ' ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδ' ᾗ.
 καὶ μέν που κῆνον περιναίεται ἀμφὶς ἔόντες
 τείρουσ', οὐδέ τις ἐστίν, ἀρὴν καὶ λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι·
 ἀλλ' ἦτοι κεῖνός γε, σέθεν ζώοντος ἀκούων,
 χαίρει τ' ἐν θυμῷ, ἐπὶ τ' ἔλπεται ἥματα πάντα
 ὄψεσθαι φίλον υἱὸν ἀπὸ Τροίηθεν ἰόντα·
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ πανάποτμος, ἐπεὶ τέκον υἱας ἀρίστους
 Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, τῶν δ' οὔτινα φημὶ λελεῖσθαι.
 πεντήκοντά μοι ἦσαν, ὅτ' ἤλυθον υἱες Ἀχαιῶν·
 ἐννεακαίδεκα μέν μοι ἦς ἐκ νηδύος ἦσαν,
 τοὺς δ' ἄλλους μοι ἔτικτον ἐνὶ μεγάροισι γυναῖκες.
 τῶν μὲν πολλῶν θοῦρος Ἄρης ὑπὸ γούνατ' ἔλυσεν·

ὃς δέ μοι οἶος ἔην, εἴρυτο δὲ ἄστυ καὶ αὐτοὺς,
 τὸν σὺ πρῶν κτεῖνας, ἀμυνόμενον περὶ πάτρης,
 "Ἐκτορα" τοῦ νῦν εἵνεχ' ἰκάνω νῆας Ἀχαιῶν,
 λυσόμενος παρὰ σείῳ, φέρω δ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα.
 ἀλλ' αἰδεῖο θεοὺς, Ἀχιλεῦ, αὐτόν τ' ἐλέησον,
 μνησάμενος σοῦ πατρός· ἐγὼ δ' ἐλεεινότερός περ
 ἔτλην δ', οἷ' οὐπω τις ἐπιχθύνιος βροτὸς ἄλλος,
 ἀνδρὺς παιδοφόνου ποτὶ στόμα χεῖρ' ὀρέγεσθαι.

Ὡς φάτο· τῷ δ' ἄρα πατρός ὑφ' ἥμερον ὦρσε γόοιο,
 ἀψάμενος δ' ἄρα χεῖρὸς, ἀπώσατο ἦκα γέροντα.
 τῷ δὲ μνησάμενω, ὁ μὲν "Ἐκτορος ἀνδροφόνου,
 κλαῖ' ἡδινὰ, προπάροιθε ποδῶν Ἀχιλλῆος ἐλυσθείς·
 αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς κλαῖεν ἐὼν πατέρ', ἄλλοτε δ' αὐτε
 Πάτροκλον· τῶν δὲ στοναχὴ κατὰ δώματ' ὀρώρει.*

"Think, O Achilles, semblance of the Gods!
 On thy own father, full of days like me,
 And trembling on the gloomy verge of life.
 Some neighbour Chief, it may be, even now
 Oppresses him, and there is none at hand,
 No friend to succour him in his distress.
 Yet, doubtless, hearing that Achilles lives,
 He still rejoices, hoping, day by day,
 That one day he shall see the face again
 Of his own son from distant Troy return'd.
 But me no comfort cheers, whose bravest sons,
 So late the flower of Ilium, all are slain.
 When Greece came hither, I had fifty sons;
 Nineteen were children of one bed, the rest
 Born of my concubines. A num'rous house!
 But fiery Mars hath thinn'd it. One I had,
 One, more than all my sons the strength of Troy,

* Ω. xxiv. 486—512.

Whom standing for his country thou hast slain—
 Hector. His body to redeem I come
 Into Achaia's fleet, bringing, myself,
 Ransom inestimable to thy tent.
 Rev'rence the Gods, Achilles! recollect
 Thy father; for his sake compassion show
 To me more pitiable still, who draw
 Home to my lips (humiliation yet
 Unseen on earth) his hand who slew my son!

So saying, he waken'd in his soul regret
 Of his own sire; softly he placed his hand
 On Priam's hand, and push'd him gently away.
 Remembrance melted both. Rolling before
 Achilles' feet, Priam his son deplored,
 Wide-slaught'ring Hector, and Achilles wept
 By turns his father, and by turns his friend
 Patroclus: sounds of sorrow fill'd the tent."

Comper.

Characters
 of the
 Poem.

As to the Characters of the Iliad, they are admirable for their variety and distinctness; not indeed worked up in the detail, or to the full development, of modern Tragedy, but traced in a few bold and shaping lines in the manner most agreeable to the spirit of heroic poetry. In the Drama, the Poet studiously introduces Contrasts; in heroic poetry Distinctness is all that is wanted, and as much as would be pleasing: The Epic poet does not so much set out his personages or actors for exhibition in themselves, or to play them off one against the other, as for the purpose of conducting and animating the Action of the

Poem; and this is especially true of the *Iliad*, in which the several heroes come in and go off something in the way of the romantic compeers of Orlando, without any obvious connection, or, in every instance, contributing by what they say or do to the development of the general Story. It would, indeed, be quite inconsistent with the plan of the Epic poem of subsequent times, to introduce such a number of warriors so nearly equal in personal prowess and success as those of the *Iliad*: Ajax, Diomed, Agamemnon, Hector, Ulysses, Menelaus, Idomeneus, Sarpedon, Æneas, Meriones, and the rest, would have been an overwhelming incumbrance to Virgil or Tasso: but they all move at large in the *Iliad*, and each finds ample room to play the hero in his turn. The passion and ferocity of Achilles, the modesty and never-failing constancy of Diomed, the animal courage of Ajax, the courtliness of Ulysses, the generosity, the kindness and the rashness of Hector, and the *gentlemanly* gallantry of Sarpedon, are very remarkable. The epithet *μεσαιπόλιος** (half grey-haired) distinguishes Idomeneus, who is in other respects the least prominent amongst the chiefs, and Phoenix differs from Nestor as an old man in private life is different from a veteran statesman. But few things are more interesting than to observe how the same hand that has

* Ν'. xiii. 361.

given us the fury and the inconsistency of Achilles, gives us also the consummate elegance and tenderness of Helen. She is throughout the Iliad a genuine Lady, graceful in motion and speech, noble in her associations, full of remorse for a fault, for which higher powers seem responsible, yet grateful and affectionate towards those with whom that fault had connected her. I have always thought the following speech, in which Helen laments Hector and hints at her own invidious and unprotected situation in Troy, as almost the sweetest passage in the poem. It is worth the being quoted :—

Ἔκτορ, ἐμῷ θυμῷ δαέρων πολὺ φίλτατε πάντων,
 Ἦ μὲν μοι πόσις ἐστὶν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής,
 Ὃς μ' ἄγαγε Τροίηνδ' ὥς πρὶν ὤφελλον ὀλέσθαι.
 Ἦδ' ἄρ' ἄρ' νῦν μοι τόδ' ἐεικοστὸν ἔτος ἐστίν,
 Ἐξ οὗ κείθεν ἔβην, καὶ ἐμῆς ἀπελήλυθα πάτρης·
 Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἔτι σεῦ ἄκουσα κακὸν ἔπος, οὐδ' ἀσύφηλον·
 Ἄλλ' εἴ τις με καὶ ἄλλος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐνίπτοι
 Δαέρων, ἢ γαλόων, ἢ εἰνατέρων ἐϋπέπλων,
 Ἦ ἐκυρῇ, (ἐκυρὸς δέ, πατήρ ὧς, ἦπιος αἰεὶ,)
 Ἄλλὰ σὺ τόν γ' ἐπέεσσιν παραιφάμενος, κατέρυκες
 Σῆ τ' ἀγανοφροσύνη, καὶ σοῖς ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσιν.
 Τῷ σέ θ' ἄμα κλαίω καὶ ἔμ' ἄμμορον, ἀχγνυμένη κῆρ.
 Οὐ γάρ τις μοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ
 Ἦπιος, οὐδὲ φίλος· πάντες δέ με πεφρίκασιν.*

Dear Hector! dearer to my heart by far
 Than all my brothers of thy kindred are,
 Though twice ten years have seen me here abide
 Fair Paris' wife, (ah! had I rather died,

* Ω'. xxiv. 762.

Before he lured me from my native land,
 Before he brought me to this Dardan strand!)
 Yet for those twice ten years no single word
 Unkind, brave Hector! from thy lips I've heard.
 Nay, if another hath begun to chide,
 Brother or sister, or a brother's bride
 Robed in bright garments, or if even the Queen,
 (Thy father ever showed a father's mien!)—
 Still didst thou check them, still would'st kindness
 teach

By thy sweet carriage and by thy sweet speech!
 Thee, therefore, and with thee myself I weep,
 For thee and me I mourn in anguish deep;
 Throughout wide Troy I see no friendly eye,
 And Trojans shudder if I pass them by.

The way in which all the Homeric characters, with perhaps the single exception of Ajax, were debased by the Tragedians will be noticed hereafter. On the stage they may be Athenians, but they are no longer heroes.*

The Similes of the Iliad form a very peculiar Similes. feature of its poetry. Of these there are more than two hundred, and there is hardly one of that number that has not been imitated nearly as many times. The Homeric Simile has always a point of similitude, but beyond that one point the degrees of resemblance vary infinitely. Almost each simile in the Iliad is a complete picture in itself,

* I have stated the Ajax of Sophocles as the only exception; perhaps the Agamemnon of Æschylus may be added, though it is rather *par quam similis*. Ulysses and Menelaus have been the worst treated.

and it is often not easy to catch at a glance the middle point upon which it is raised; for although many of them are wonderfully minute in their correspondence with the circumstances of the action, many more of them take, as it were, a hint from the occasion, and the Poet goes on to finish the details of the image or group of images, which has been accidentally suggested to him. The best taste will be content with this general resemblance, and not labor, except in some striking cases, to assort the minor particulars, which will frequently lead to a quaintness and an affectation utterly foreign to the Homeric genius. To illustrate this, a very picturesque simile may be advantageously quoted, the subject of comparison in which is simply the incessant hurling of stones and other missiles by the Greeks and Trojans at each other:—

Τῶν δ', ὥστε νιφάδες χιόνος πίπτωσι θαμειαὶ
 ἡματι χειμερίῳ, ὅτε τ' ὤρετο μητιέτα Ζεὺς
 νιφέμεν ἀνθρώποισι, πιφανσκόμενος τὰ ἅ κῆλα·
 κοιμήσας δ' ἀνέμους χέει ἔμπεδον, ὅφρα καλύψῃ
 ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων κορυφὰς καὶ πρόυνας ἄκρους,
 καὶ πεδία λωτεῦντα, καὶ ἀνδρῶν πίονα ἔργα.
 καὶ τ' ἐφ' ἄλός πολυῆς κέχυνται λιμέσιν τε καὶ ἀκταῖς·
 κῦμα δέ μιν προσπλάζον ἐρύκεται, ἄλλα τε πάντα
 εἴλνται καθύπερθ', ὅτ' ἐπιβρίση Διὸς ὄμβρος·
 ὥς τῶν ἀμφοτέρωσε λίθοι πωτῶντο θαμειαί.*

“As the feathery snows
 Fall frequent on some wint'ry day, when Jove

* M'. xii. 278.

Hath ris'n to shed them on the race of man,
 And show his arrowy stores; he lulls the winds,
 Then shakes them down continual, cov'ring thick
 Mountain tops, promontories, flowery meads,
 And cultur'd valleys rich; the ports and shores
 Receive it also of the hoary Deep,
 But there the waves it bound, while all beside
 Lies whelm'd beneath Jove's fast-descending shower:
 So thick, from side to side, by Trojans hurl'd
 Against the Greeks, and by the Greeks return'd,
 The stony vollies flew." *Cowper.*

What a beautiful and exact picture is this of the snow falling long and heavily by the sea side on a quiet winter day! As for the similitude, that consists merely in the frequent snowflakes and the frequent missiles. There is another simile of the same kind, where Agamemnon is described as lying awake in anxious meditation:—

Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἀστράπτῃ πόσις Ἥρης ἡϊκόμοιο,
 τεύχων ἢ πολὺν ὄμβρον ἀθέσφατον, ἥ ἐ χάλαζαν,
 ἢ νίφετον, ὅτε πέρ τε χιῶν ἐπάλυνεν ἀρούρας,
 ἥ ἐ ποθὶ πτολέμοιο μέγα στόμα πευκεδανοῖο
 ὧς πυκιν' ἐν στήθεσσι νεισεσθονάχιζ' Ἀγαμέμνων.*

“As when the spouse of beauteous Juno darts
 His frequent fires, designing heavy rain
 Immense, or hail-storm, or field-whitening snow,
 Or else wide-throated war calamitous:
 So frequent were the groans by Atreus' son
 Heav'd from his inmost heart.” *Cowper.*

The point of comparison is here also between the

* κ'. x. 5.

quick succession of the drops of rain or hailstones, or snowflakes, and the frequency of the groans of the hero.

On the other hand, nothing can be more exact than the following simile. Hector rushes from the top of the Grecian wall into the intervening plain, till he comes close upon the phalanx of the Ajaces, and then stops:—

— — — Ὀλοοίτροχος ὥς ἀπὸ πέτρης,
ὄντε κατὰ στεφάνης ποταμὸς χειμάρρους ὥση,
ρήξας ἀσπέτῳ ὄμβρῳ ἀναιδέος ἔχματα πέτρης,
ὑψι τ' ἀναθρώσκων πέτεται, κτυπέει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ
ῥλη· ὁ δ' ἀσφαλέως θέει ἔμπεδον, ὄφρ' ἂν ἵκηται
ἰσόπεδον, τότε δ' οὐτί κυλίνδεται, ἐσσύμενός περ.
ὥς Ἐκτωρ.*

And as a round peece of a rocke,†
which with a winter's flood
Is from his top torne, when a showre
poured from a bursten cloud
Hath broke the naturall band it had
within the rough steepe rocke,
Flies jumping all adowne the woods,
resounding everie shocke,
And on, uncheckt, it headlong leaps,
till in a plaine it stay,
And then (tho' never so impelled),
it stirs not any way:—
So Hector.—*Chapman.*

So the beautiful simile where the wounded

* Ν'. xiii. 137.

† For the convenience of printing, the long anapæstic line of Chapman is here broken at the cæsura into two verses.

Ulysses keeps the Trojans at bay till Ajax comes to rescue him, is exquisitely picturesque, and yet, with the exception of the fate of Ulysses, admirably accurate :—

————— ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' αὐτὸν
 Τρῶες ἔπονθ', ὥσεί τε δαφουνοὶ θῶες ὄρεσφιν
 ἀμφ' ἔλαφον κεραὸν βεβλημένον, ὃν τ' ἔβαλ' ἀνὴρ
 ἰὼ ἀπὸ νευρῆς· τὸν μὲν τ' ἤλυξε πόδεσσι
 φεύγων, ὅφρ' αἶμα λιαρὸν, καὶ γούνατ' ὀρώρη
 αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ τόνγε δαμάσσεται ὠκὺς οἷστός,
 ὠμοφάγοι μιν θῶες ἐν οὔρεσι δαρδάπτουσιν
 ἐν νέμει σκιερῷ· ἐπὶ τε λῖν ἤγαγε δαίμων
 σίντην· θῶες μὲν τε διέτρεσαν, αὐτὰρ ὁ δάπτει
 ὥς ῥα τότε ἀμφ' Ὀδυσῆα.*

Circled with foes—as when a packe
 of bloodie jackals cling
 About a goodly palmed Hart,
 hurt with a hunter's bow ;
 Whose 'scape his nimble feet insure,
 whilst his warme blood doth flow,
 And his light knees have powre to move ;—
 but (maistred by his wounde,
 Embost within a shadie hill),
 the jackals charge him rounde,
 And teare his flesh—when instantly
 Fortune sends in the powres
 Of some stern Lion—with whose sighte
 they flie, and he devours.—
 So they around Ulysses prest.—*Chapman.*

It is especially in the similes of the Iliad that Love of Nature.
 Homer discovers that love for, and accurate obser-

* A'. xi. 473.

vation of, the external face of Nature, without which no great poet ever did or can exist. There is not one of these beautiful pieces from which a painting might not be taken; indeed they are rather pictures in themselves.* Their fidelity is perfect, and the point of view and the coloring prove the eye and the hand of a master-genius. The following passage is well known, but not so well as its beauty and truth deserve:—

Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστροι φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ Σελήνην
φαίνεται ἀριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ' ἔπλετο νήνεμος αἰθήρ,
ἔκ τ' ἔφανον πᾶσαι σκοπιαί, καὶ πρόωνες ἄκροι,

* In a very able and elegant work,† which I hope I shall not be thought presumptuous in venturing to recommend to the attentive perusal of classical students, an opinion exactly contrary to this is maintained. “Ipsi etiam Homero, quanquam intima ei patebant naturæ penetralia, et omnia cœli terræque spatia videtur unus amplecti, tamen artem hanc externas res depingendî ab affectibus et moribus sejunctas, aut deesse ferme judico, aut ab eo contemptui haberi.”‡ That there are exceptions, (amongst others, a passage quoted above,§) and that all antiquity and, as might have been added, all modern ages are of an opposite mind, is admitted; but the Bishop thinks that the art of the picturesque was almost unknown before the Augustan period, and he dissects many of the Homeric descriptions with the view of proving this position. I know no way of arguing upon such a matter; it must be left to the imagination of each individual reader; and for my own part, I think, if I possessed the manual skill, there is no poet, ancient or modern, to whom I should have such constant recourse for subjects and sketches of images in every kind of drawing as to Homer. “Quæ species ac forma pugnæ, quæ acies, quod remigium, qui motus hominum, qui ferarum, non ita expictus est, ut quæ ipse non viderit, nos ut videre-mus effecerit?”—*Tusc. Disp.* lib. v. 39; and see *Wood's Essay*, passim.

† Prælectiones Academicæ. E. Copleston.

‡ Prael. lib. v.

§ M'. xii. 278.

καὶ νάπαι· οὐρανόνθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερβάλλῃ ἄσπετος αἰθήρ,
 . πάντα δέ τ' εἶδεται ἄστρα· γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν.*

As when about the silver moon,
 when aire is free from winde
 And stars shine cleare, to whose sweet beams
 high prospects and the brows
 Of all steepe hills and pinnacles
 thrust up themselves for shows,
 And even the lowly vallies joy
 to glitter in their sight ;—
 When the unmeasured firmament
 bursts to disclose her light,
 And all the signs in heaven are seene,
 that glad the shepherd's heart.—*Chapman.*

In comparison with almost all the classic poets who followed him, the superiority of Homer in this particular is quite surprizing; and it is remarkable that those who in succeeding ages generally have come nearest to him, have, almost without exception, been the earliest, or amongst the earliest, poets of their several countries. Lucretius, Dante, and our own famous Chaucer—who, in a more advanced stage of the metrical development of the English language, would have breathed the Homeric spirit within him more freely—have, each of them, painted nature with rival, but original, hands. It is this dutiful fellowship with, this affectionate worship of, the beautiful forms and harmonious colorings of nature, that has flung

* ο'. viii. 551.

such an unwithering freshness on images ancient as the hills and familiar as our own homes; it is this that has dilated the minstrel bard or bards of a small and unlettered people into the master-poet of all the world; this chiefly that has caused the tree of elder Greece to take second root in soils and under skies not its own, and has supplied moisture for those golden fruits and those springing flowers—fruits, wherein lieth *Nepenthe*—flowers, which are flowers of *Amaranth*!

Knowledge
of the Arts.

But the *Iliad* is a storehouse of rude and imperfect Art,* as it is a mirror of consummate Nature. “The elements of all the arts,” says *Quintilian*, “are found in *Homer* ;”† and, indeed, there is hardly a department of human labor and knowledge which, directly or indirectly, according to the measure of the times, is not introduced in the *Iliad*. What is so introduced bespeaks the accuracy of personal knowledge. The geography of Greece, as before remarked, and of the coasts of Asia Minor is exact; the acquaintance with Egypt and Phœnicia obvious; the wind, the waves and the foam of the ocean, the motion, the sound and the tackle of the ship, are described with the familiarity and the fondness of a frequent mariner. In surgery, in agriculture of many kinds, in architec-

* See *Mitford's History of Greece*, 1 vol., where this subject is discussed, and the general results very well stated.

† *Lib. xii. 11. 21.*

ture, in fortification, in smiths' and carpenters' work, the attainments of the age are technically displayed, and yet with that ease and simplicity that indicates complete knowledge and long familiarity. Homer indeed speaks of these things as a poet and a man of the world, showing that he knows them all, but is above dwelling or dogmatizing on any of them. Hesiod, in the *Works and Days*, really sets about teaching husbandry for the use of farmers. But that singular and admirable poem had a distinct object, and was of a species altogether different from the old heroic poetry.

In the early age in which the *Iliad* was composed, a poet must necessarily have possessed all the knowledge of men and things which was then attainable; for his very vocation consisted in pleasing and instructing all classes of society, and the natives of various islands or provinces through which he wandered. His character was pre-eminently that of a teacher, and no ignorance would have been excusable in one of such pretensions and of such advantages. Then there were no books from which information could be procured at second-hand, and it was this necessity of learning every thing practically by seeing and hearing, that induced the clearness and force of description, which in the very highest degree are peculiar to Homer, but which in different proportions

Circumstances of early Poets.

characterize the writings of the earlier and more popular poets of every nation. I cannot help once more earnestly recommending the student to notice and appreciate these qualities, which, more than any others, and now as much as ever, preserve from bad taste and obscure expression—which throw an air of nature and reality around fiction, remove the obstacles of national customs and peculiar manners, and make the poem of an individual bard acceptable to all mankind.

A Poet's
Knowledge.

For Genius of any kind, or in any age, is a being of an extremely tender and susceptible nature; its strength, temper and dimensions depend much on external accident; it may be stifled in its birth, enervated in its nonage, or curtailed of its fair proportion by defect of education; it has no irresistible tendency towards maturity; it has no indefeasible claim upon immortality. Whether itself shall be consummate, or its creations everlasting, rests upon other causes besides the power of its own physical essence. It is not merely a tree, the fruits of which may be sweet or sour according to the measure of its cultivation; it is also not unfrequently a flower which dies or blooms as it is visited with blight, or fostered by the dews and gales of heaven. Genius, in its proper and original sense, is the power of creation or invention, as distinguished from discourse or reasoning upon admitted premisses: and know-

ledge of every sort, and in every degree, is in its nature a proper, and, in a great degree, a necessary, condition of the complete operation of Genius. But if memory, sense and judgment be necessary, as they surely are, to the full exercise of the powers of Genius, then every thing which strengthens, and every thing which impairs, those faculties, must certainly, in like proportion, augment or diminish the force of invention.

If this be true of Genius, as directing itself to other objects, such as history and philosophy separately taken, it is, if possible, more true, and certainly applies with more obvious clearness, to the case of Genius in poetry. For Poetry is the convergence, nay, the identity, of all other species of knowledge; it creates the Individual to stand as the symbol of the Universal, the Finite for the Infinite; it has to do not with men, but man; it is addressed to the great republican heart of the civilized world, and must therefore speak in the all-pervading language of essential human nature. No poet can be a great poet, but as being inclusively a naturalist and a historian in the light as well as the life of genuine philosophy. All other men's worlds are the Poet's chaos. His Imagination must be all compact; that is, all his powers of every sort must be concentrated into one, before his pen will be able to give to the airy forms of things unknown

“A local habitation and a name.”

His is that most wondrous and alchemic power which extracts and purifies and compounds the material drugs supplied by learning and research, and waves over them the wand of its enchantment, till, in the crisis of mental projection, they glance out embodied and transfigured into eternal images of Light.

The greatest poets that have ever lived have, without exception, been among the wisest men of their times. I say wisest, because the word learned is often misunderstood; the wisdom of the poet may include more or less of book learning, as it may happen; in the present age it must include some certainly; but the knowledge of the Mind and its powers, of the Passions and their springs, the love and study of the beautiful forms of the visible creation—this it is which can alone teach a man to think in sympathy with the great body of his fellow creatures, and enable him to draw back the veil which different manners and various costume have spread over the unchangeable essence of humanity. In this sense it is most true that Homer and Dante and Milton were learned in an extraordinary degree; but, more than all, that Shakspeare was the most learned man that ever lived and was not directly inspired by Heaven.

On the tip of his subduing tongue
ds of arguments and question deep,
 ation prompt, and reason strong

For his advantage still did wake and sleep,
 To make the weeper laugh, the laugher weep;
 He had the dialect and different skill,
 Catching all passions in his craft of will,
 That he doth in the general bosom reign
 Of young, of old.

But to return to Homer. The Morality of the *Morals*.
Iliad is a subject that deserves particular attention. It is not *perfect* upon Christian principles: how should it be so under the circumstances of the composition of the poem? Yet, compared with that of all the rest of the classical poetry, it is of a transcendently noble and generous character. The answer* of Hector to Polydamas, who would have dissuaded a further prosecution of the Trojan success, has been repeated by many of the most devoted patriots the world ever saw. *We*, who defy augury in these matters, can yet add nothing to the nobleness of the sentiment. "Tell me not," cries the gallant Trojan, "tell me not of auguries! Let your birds fly to the East or to the West—I care not in this cause: we obey the Will of Jupiter, who rules over all, and

Ὁ Εἰς οἰωνὸς ἀριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης."

The one best omen is our country's cause.

The virtuous simplicity of the character of Achilles is, as it were, condensed in his famous speech

* M'. xii. 231.

in the tent,* and may well give us a very exalted notion of the Poet's own moral feeling.

Ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Ἀΐδαο πύλῃσιν,
ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσὶν, ἄλλο δὲ βάζει.

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,
My heart detests him as the gates of hell.—*Pope*.

Again—

*Ὡ μούνοι φιλέουσ' ἀλόχους μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
Ἀτρεΐδαι; ἐπεὶ ὅστις ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἐχέφρων
Τὴν αὐτοῦ φιλεῖ καὶ κήδεσθαι ὥς καὶ ἐγὼ τὴν
Ἐκ θυμοῦ φίλεον.

Of all mankind do Atreus' sons alone
Cherish their wives? Each good man loves his own
And keeps with care; as from my soul was She,
Slave though she were, loved tenderly by me.

It would, indeed, be tedious to enumerate the instances occurring in every page of that comparatively pure and wise morality which often honorably distinguishes the heroic or Homeric age from that subsequent to it. The very vices are bold and open, and seem to lean to the side of virtue; and throughout the poem the lessons on political justice and expediency are so sound and so noble, that the praise of Horace is only literally true;—

—quid sit pulcrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Planius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.†

Imperfections.

It must be confessed that there are some passages in the *Iliad*, which a severe law of proportion

* γ. ix. 308.

† Epist. I. 2, 3.

would curtail or expunge. The speech of Nestor, in answer to the pressing questions of Patroclus when sent by Achilles to learn the name of a wounded individual,* the dialogue between Meriones and Idomeneus,† much of the speech of Agamemnon at the reconciliation,‡ and of that of Æneas to Achilles,§ seem out of place. The 13th Rhapsody|| of the exploits of Idomeneus does not advance the story, and there is a languor and disjointedness perceptible through the greater part of it. But these and similar imperfections, many of which, I doubt not, are attributable to compilation and ignorant criticism, are after all inconsiderable in weight or number, and do not sensibly interfere with the general impression of propriety and good sense which a perusal of the *Iliad* ever produces. Besides, it should be observed that many of these passages are beautiful in themselves, and make up for their relative want of proportion by their own intrinsic worth.

With regard to the language or dialect of the *Iliad*, it may, perhaps, be useful to say a few words to guard the student against the errors and confusion which common Lexicons and common editions have a tendency to create on this subject. There are many excellent schools in which it is taught that Homer made use of all the Greek

Language.

* A'. xi. 669.

† N'. xiii. 249.

‡ T'. xix. 78.

§ T'. xx. 200.

|| N'. xiii.

dialects promiscuously, and out of them coined a new dialect of his own—that one word is Ionic for this, another word Attic for that, and so on;—whereas in fact such positions are as absurd as they are groundless. For what should we say of an Italian poet, seeking bread and fame by recitation, who should mix Venetian, Neapolitan and Maltese in one stanza—or of a Spaniard, who should vary his Castilian with Gallician and Catalan—or of an Englishman, who should correct the monotony of his English by the alternate varieties of Somersetshire and Yorkshire, together with an infusion of broad Scotch? The absurdity is not greater than to suppose Homer, under any probable circumstances of his age or times, to have recited in what we now call Doric, Æolic, Ionic and Attic. The truth is, I believe, nearly as follows. The ultimate foundation of Greek is Pelasgic,* of which, whether it came from the East or the West, we know nothing. Then the invading sons of the Thessalian Hellen introduced by conquest their native tongue wherever they settled, but of that tongue we know little more than of the Pelasgic. The result, however, of the amalgamation or adjustment of these two constituents, or of the prevalence of one of them over the other, was an old and barbarous Doric, which therefore is to be con-

* According to Niebuhr the Pelasgi were totally distinct in origin from the Hellenes.

sidered the immediate basis of Greek. It is not probable that any very definite subdivisions existed in this mother-tongue previously to the colonization of the coasts of Asia Minor, first by emigrants from a part of the Peloponnesus, who were called Æolians from Æolus, a son of Hellen, and subsequently by emigrants from Attica, who were called Ionians from Ion, a grandson of the same Hellen. What I have called Doric, is sometimes called Æolic, and might be equally well called Ionic; for it should seem that these names, previously to the emigrations to Asia, denoted nothing more than the different settlements of the members of the same family of Hellen. In the *Iliad* the Athenians are expressly called Ionians.* They were Attics by residence, Ionians by blood. Those therefore that abandoned Attica were afterwards exclusively known by their name of blood, and were from thenceforth styled Ionians, and their colony Ionia; whilst, on the other hand, those who remained in Attica soon began to assume the characteristic name of Attics or Athenians. Still they all spoke the same language, the old Doric, and it seems clear that it was from the colonists, and especially from the Ionians, that the first important refinements in the mother-tongue were derived. The commerce of the Ionians with, and their local contiguity to, the more

* N. xiii, 685.

civilized kingdoms of Asia, soon infused a new softness and flexibility into their Doric, and got rid of many of its old asperities. The Æolians made their improvements too, but retained many usages which were becoming obsolete in the rising dialect of the Ionians. The birth and growth of Attic were later, and founded on a much more general intercourse with foreign nations, and a more miscellaneous adoption of their idioms.* Meantime the Doric of Laconia and Messenia remained the spring of the whole, much and variously refined in course of time, but still pre-eminently the mother-tongue of Greece. Now the *Iliad* is written in the softest and most improved Greek of the time,† which was the Ionian; and those words and usages which have been called instances of other dialects, are really legitimate parts of it, and

* Καὶ οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ἰδίᾳ μᾶλλον καὶ φωνῇ καὶ διαίτῃ καὶ σχήματι χρῶνται. Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ κεκραμένη ἐξ πάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων. "The rest of the Greeks have a more peculiar dialect and mode of living; but the Athenians speak and live in a manner mixed up from amongst the peculiarities of all the other Greeks, and even Barbarians."—*Xen. de Rep. Ath.* 696, C.

† "Pars ac fons e quo reliquæ omnes effluerunt, est lingua Homericæ; quæ non e diversis dialectis et licentiis poeticis, ut grammatici somniarunt, conflata est, sed Achæorum vel Danaorum veterum sermo quotidianus et universalis fuit; quo, Homericis temporibus, omnia publica et privata negotia transigebantur, atque omnes sensus et affectus animorum exprimebantur. Eorum enim temporum homines neque lexica, neque grammatica, neque libros ullos habebant; quapropter, si poeta verba insolita, aut modos loquendi ab usu communi abhorrentes in carminibus usurpasset, nemo auditorum intellecturus fuisset."—*Knight, Proleg.* lib. lxx.

only became provincial or peculiar when subsequently dialects, properly so called, arose, and each retained idioms which although rejected by the others, were yet equally the genuine-offspring of the old and fundamental Doric. Hence *μητιέτα* is not Æolic for *μητιέτης*; *ἡμέρη* is not Ionic for *ἡμέρα*; *Μενέλεως* is not Attic for *Μενέλαος*; nor *αὐτευν* Doric for *αὐτεον* or *αὐτοῦν*. All these forms were pure Ionian Greek, that is to say, the most refined and polished Greek of the day; but afterwards each of them, being retained exclusively by a single people, became the idiom of a particular dialect. No doubt Homer, like every other great primitive poet, wrought prodigious improvements in his native language; and although it is a figure of speech to say that Greek sprang completely formed from his mouth, as Minerva did armed from the head of Jupiter, it may be true, as in the cases of Dante and Chaucer, that a very remarkable refinement is to be dated from the composition of the first great poem in the language. Certain it is, that the Greek of the *Iliad* seems equal to the expression of every mode of feeling, and of every combination of circumstances; and although the strict rules of grammatical concord and analogy are frequently violated, there are, perhaps, not more of these anomalies in that poem than in the books of Thucydides, or than

are to be found in every great writer in every language.*

Digamma.

As to the Digamma, so much profound erudition has been lavished upon the subject by critics of the very highest celebrity in the literary world, that it would, indeed, be worse than idle in me to pretend to enter into the question at length. A few points may, however, be stated which it will be useful for the student to remember. The ancient Greeks prefixed to many words beginning with vowels a letter which from its shape (F) was called by the Grammarians Digamma, or double Gamma. According to Trypho,† this letter was common to the Ionians, Æolians, Dorians, Laconians and Bœotians; but, being preserved by the Æolians to

* In Thucydides every case, I believe, has been found used absolutely; but these and other usages in that great author, not consistent with the analogy of theoretic grammar, must not be set down to the score of incorrectness and want of purity of diction, but, as I believe every scholar will confess, to our ignorance of the genius and full powers of this wonderful language. In particular, we evidently know very imperfectly the power of the participles, and their capacity of combination with the article. A page of Thucydides is enough to prove this to any scholar's mind.

† Προστίθεται δὲ τὸ δίγαμμα παρά τε Ἰῶσι, καὶ Αἰολεῦσι, καὶ Δωριεῦσι, καὶ Λέκωνσι, καὶ Βοιωτοῖς· ὅλον ἀναξ Ἰᾶναξ.—Πάθη λεξέων, 11.

Cicero, writing to Atticus, says—"Neque solum Romæ, sed etiam Deli, tuum digamma videram."—Lib. ix. ep. 9.

On this the Abbé Mongault says—"Ciceron appelle les livres, où Atticus écrivait les sommes qu' il prêtait à intérêt *Digamma*, parce que le Digamme des Eoliens avait la même figure qu' une F Latine, qui est la première lettre du mot *Fœnus*, usure."

a much later period than by the other more polished dialects of Greece, was always called the Æolic Digamma. The character itself is not found in any MSS. of ancient poets, but only on the Delian marble, discovered by Montfaucon in 1708, on some coins of the Greek town of Velia in Italy, and in some other inscriptions. It has been differently pronounced, as B, F, V, W; but there is a preponderance of evidence to induce us to believe that its power was something very like the V, or between the V and the W. At least, it is quite clear that in οἶνος *vinum*, οἶκος *vicus*, ἦρ *ver*, ἰς *vis*, ὄϊς *ovis*, αἰὼν *ævum*, ὕλη* *sylva*, &c., the power of the Greek Digamma is uniformly rendered in Latin by a V. Whether the Latin V was sounded like an F, as in High German, or near to a B, as in Castilian, it is now impossible to say. Bentley supposed the character as well as the power to have existed in Homer's time, and proposed an edition of the Iliad with the Digamma prefixed—a proposition since carried into execution by Mr. R. P. Knight; according to Dawes,† however, the character itself was of subsequent creation, and the power alone was known at the date of the Homeric Poems. It is, perhaps, reasonable to

* The young scholar should remark that the aspirate or rough breathing of a word in one language is very frequently represented by the hissing letter S in another, as here in *sylva*—ἕξ—*sex*, ὑπερ, *super*, &c.

† *Miscell. Critic.* iv.

conjecture that if there were *any* written characters at that time, the Digamma was amongst them; but that when the Homeric Rhapsodies were compiled or revised under Pisistratus and his sons, the power of the Digamma having become nearly obsolete in the prevailing dialects, the character itself was entirely omitted.

Now there are numerous passages in the Homeric Poems, in which the legitimate application of the Digamma can hardly be questioned,* and by its means an abundance of useless particles may be removed from the text.† But the difficulty is, that there is not one digammated word in Homer, with regard to which the use of the Digamma is constant and without exception. Some of these apparent exceptions may be removed without much violence; but there are also many others which are so impracticable that Heyne and Mr. R. P. Knight have recourse to the only effectual method, and expunge verse and passage together. "Αλις, εἶδω, οἶκος, οἶνος, are digammated with less interruption than any other words in the Iliad, but there are irremovable exceptions in each

* Matthiæ questions it, but see the remarks of the Editor of the English Translation of his Grammar.—41. xxv.

† These particles have puzzled scrupulous scholars sadly. A former head-master of Eton, now no more, is said to have invariably distinguished between σοι—"Sir, to you," and τει—"at your service;" while the Dean, as Dr. Cyril Jackson is always called by Christchurch men, rendered Τρωῖς ἦα by—"the Trojans—God help them."

even of these instances. Perhaps, therefore, it may be a reasonable solution of this difficulty to suppose, that, as in the course of refinement the most elegant dialects of Greece unquestionably got rid of this ancient prefix altogether, the Homeric Poems were composed at a period when the use of it was still general, but yet beginning to be laid aside, and that in fact the application or non-application of it had become the subject of poetical license—in some words its use, in others its omission, being the more common. That this must have been the exact state of the language with respect to the use of the Digamma at *some* period before the age of Æschylus is certain—the supposition of its having been totally laid aside at any precise moment being obviously absurd; and we have already seen that Ionian Greek would undoubtedly be the first to admit a change, which from the circumstance of its entire adoption by the most cultivated ~~and~~ literary of the Greek states, I cannot help suspecting to have been a greater improvement in euphony than is generally imagined.

In noticing the Versification of the Iliad, it may be truly said that its Metre is the best, and its Rhythm the least, understood of any in use amongst the ancients. Whilst the Trimeter Aca-
Versifica-
tion.
talectic Iambic was written with almost equal success by numberless Greek poets of different ages,

not one ever maintained for twenty lines together the Homeric modulation of the Hexameter. This is chiefly attributable to the rigorously artificial construction of the Senarius, the technical rules of which, closely followed, would in all competent hands produce the same, or nearly the same, effect; whereas the variety of the rhythm of the Homeric Hexameter is endless; and whilst the Iambics of the Tragedians always put us in mind of the Buskin and the Mask—the verse of the Iliad seems the musical efflux of a minstrel whose unpremeditated songs are borne on the breeze-like tunings of a lyre. It is idle to attempt to lay down rules for the rhythm of the Iliad; those who have read the poem know and feel, though they cannot understand or imitate, its incomparable melody; and all the learning in the world on the subject of Cæsura and Arsis has no more enabled posterity to approach to the Homeric flow, than those who have laid out two dozen vessels on the lines of the Victory, have ever succeeded in making one to sail like that immortal ship.

The last line of the Iliad is—

“Ὡς οἳ γ’ ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἑκτορος ἱπποδάμοιο—

literally rendered—

“Thus they performed the funeral rites of Hector,
tamer of horses”—

and Cowper says—“I cannot take my leave of

this noble poem without expressing how much I am struck with this plain conclusion of it. It is like the exit of a great man out of company whom he has entertained magnificently; neither pompous nor familiar; not contemptuous, yet without much ceremony. I recollect nothing amongst the works of mere man, that exemplifies so strongly the true style of great Antiquity."*

Such are the few points which I have thought Conclusion. worthy of the student's especial attention before and during his perusal of the Iliad. They are general in their nature, and affect the constitution and character of the whole poem. To point out beauties more particularly would lead me far beyond the limits of these Introductions, and that department of criticism forms one of the proper objects of the student's own taste and judgment. Sound general principles will lead every one, without much fear of error, to just discrimination in this matter; and after all, something must always be allowed for the natural diversities of temper and intellect in different persons. We all have our favorite poets and our favorite passages, but a well-disciplined mind will *neglect* nothing that is excellent in its kind; and as it was once said, that he who was much pleased with Cicero might be assured that he had made no small proficiency in

* The conclusion of the Paradise Lost is very similar.

learning and literature*—so with infinitely more truth may it be declared that a person, who upon distinct principles heartily admires and loves the Iliad, may conceive himself entitled to speak with confidence as to the merits of almost every other poet:—

*Αἰτίκα δ' ἡέρα μὲν σκέδασε, καὶ ἀπῶσεν ὀμίχλην,
Ἥελιος δ' ἐπέλαμψε.†*

The darkness and the mist are put to flight,
And the great Sun shines on him with his light.

* Quinct. x. l. 112. “ Ille se profecisse sciat cui Cicero valde placebit.”

† P'. xvii. 649.



INTRODUCTION

TO

THE ODYSSEY.

THAT the Odyssey is not of the same age, or by Age of the
Odyssey. the same hand or hands as the Iliad, is one of the positions of the German theory, which, though at variance with the prevalent belief* of ancient and modern times, has been countenanced by many great scholars as probable, if not absolutely demonstrated. This opinion is founded on the striking discrepancy as to the wife of Vulcan, who in the Iliad† is Charis, and in the Odyssey‡ is Venus; on the appearance of Mercury§ as the constant messenger of Olympus, to the exclusion of Iris, who almost constantly acts that part in the Iliad;|| on the change in the forms of many

* It was however a question. "Græcorum iste morbus fuit, querere quem numerum remigum Ulysses habuisset, prior scripta esset Ilias an Odyssea; præterea an ejusdem esset auctoris."

Seneca de Brev. Vit. c. 13.

† Il. 2'. xviii. 382-3. ‡ Od. 6'. viii. 269. § Od. 6'. v. 29.

|| Il. passim. In the Iliad, 6'. ii. 649, Crete is represented as containing one hundred cities; in the Odyssey, T'. xix. 174, the number is ninety. In the Iliad, Δ'. xxi. 692, Neleus is said to have had twelve sons; in the Odyssey, Δ'. xi. 285, it seems as if he had only three, and one daughter.

words; on the decreased simplicity of the manners, and on the altered aspect of the mythology. These latter points of difference will be particularly mentioned in the course of this Introduction, and though it would not become me to pronounce a decision on this question, I cannot help owning that I never read a book of the *Odyssey* without being more and more impressed with a persuasion that a considerable number of years must have intervened between the composition of the two poems.* It should be remarked too that in every instance of difference, the statement in the *Odyssey* is invariably that which agrees with the finally prevailing habits and creed of succeeding† ages.

Manners.

It is true indeed that the Manners of the *Odyssey* rest upon the same heroic base as those of the *Iliad*; whatever variation in degree may be observed between them, there is no difference in kind; and these two wonderful poems present to us, respectively, pictures of the maturity and decline of that primitive system, which holds something like the same relation to the civilization of ancient times that Chivalry does to the manners

* There are about 1000 lines identical in the two poems, and it is plain, upon a collation of such passages as *Od. A' i. 356*, with *Il. z'. vi. 490*, that the verses in the *Odyssey* are a modification of the original ones in the *Iliad*.

† Virgil's occasional use of *Iris* as messenger in the *Æneid* is a plain imitation of the *Iliad*. "There are authorities enough to show that in his time Mercury was the popular courier of Olympus as he is in the *Odyssey*.—*Hor. lib. i. 10*.

of Christendom. The active existence of either of those two systems was not very long lived, but the impression made by each on the world was pre-eminently enduring; and all the serious poetry of the Ancients in after-times continued to be grounded on the fables, and to imitate the spirit, of the heroic age, not less than the most noble as well as the most sprightly poetry of Europe, since the revival of letters, has been constructed on the tales, inspired with the sentiments, or adorned with the fictions, of Chivalrous Romance. The manners and occupation of Nausicaa;* the comparison of Minerva† with a youthful shepherd of royal blood, and many other instances, sufficiently demonstrate the continued existence, in striking particulars, of that Oriental simplicity which is so characteristic of the *Iliad*; and the whole tenor of the poem is such as to demand a patient and single-hearted perusal, and a total rejection of all associations with modern fashions and artificial modes of feeling. Yet it cannot be denied, that the *Odyssey* does also betray the fact of an advance in the refinement, or at least in the complication of, society; and there is a sort of conflict observable in many parts of the poem between the genuine heroic manners and the apparently

* *Od.* z'. vi. 72.

† *Od.* n'. xiii. 221. It is observable that brothers and sisters are represented, without any particular remark, as intermarrying in the Hall of *Æolus*.—*Od.* κ'. x. 7.

encroaching habits of a more modern system. Telemachus, Pisistratus, the Court of Alcinous and the suitors of Penelope, seem removed to the third or fourth generation from the godlike warriors who fought on the plains of Troy; they appear as much astonished at the strength and courage of those heroes as we are ourselves, and there is a confession of inferiority and degeneracy in the *Odyssey*, which forms a striking contrast with the haughty and successful pretensions so often asserted in the *Iliad*:—

Οὐδέ τις ἡμείων δύνατο κρατεροῖο βιοῖο
νευρὴν ἐντανύσαι, πολλὸν δ' ἐπιδενέες ἦμεν :*

————— “ No suitor there had power
To overcome the stubborn bow, that mock'd
All our attempts” — Cowper.

is the acknowledgment of Amphimedon; whilst Sthenelus, speaking with direct reference to the most celebrated warriors before the Trojan era, says—

Ἡμεῖς τοι πατέρων μέγ' ἀμείνονες εὐχόμεθ' εἶναι—†

“ We, with our sires compared, superior praise
Claim justly” — Cowper.

and

Τῷ μὴ μοι πατέρας ποθ' ὁμοίῃ ἔνθεο τιμῇ.‡

“ Their glory, then, match never more with ours.”
Cowper.

So in the general demeanor of Telemachus towards his mother (though he is certainly intended

* *Od.* *ἠ.* xxiv. 169. † *Il.* *Δ.* iv. 405. ‡ *Il.* *Δ.* iv. 410.

to be set forward as an example of filial dutifulness), there is a peremptoriness, if not harshness, of manner, which seems to savor of that spirit of comparative neglect and postponement with which the maternal relationship was generally treated amongst the Greeks of the subsequent ages. The respectful tone of Hector, especially when his age and eminence are considered, is in remarkable opposition to this. Again, with the single exception of Helen, whose character is touched with the same pre-eminent delicacy that is so conspicuous in the *Iliad*, the women of the *Odyssey* discover occasionally a modernism and a want of *heroic* simplicity, which is more easily felt during an attentive perusal than instanced by the citation of particular passages. The women of the *Odyssey* are indeed very different persons from those of the Greek Drama; nevertheless the first symptoms of a change in the tone of national society towards them are mixed up in the *Odyssey* with the still more prevailing habits and sentiments of an elder age. It may be worth while also to notice the different economy of the households of Penelope* and of Laertes,† and to consider them as representing in some degree the later and the elder system; to observe the separation and subordination of the

* *Od. passim.*

† *Od. α'. xxiv. 360—397.*

slaves and the organized service of the one, and the familiarity and almost equal ministry of master and servant in the other.*

Mythology. But to whatever extent, if at all, we may be inclined to admit that the Manners of the Odyssey are of a more modern cast than those of the Iliad, it is impossible not to perceive the striking change in the action and character of the mythological machinery of the former poem. In the Iliad not only is the final fall of Troy itself the consequence of the determined Will of Jupiter, but every battle is lost or won, every warrior kills or is killed, wounds or is wounded, stands still or advances, in obedience to the same overruling Power: the Gods themselves fight or not as he lets them loose;† they tremble at his menaces and dare not reply to his tremendous challenge:‡ he plays the game of the war alone, and it is only whilst Passion and Sleep hold him for a season entranced in the recesses of Mount Ida,§ that even Neptune breaks through his awful command. But in the Odyssey the action of Jupiter is faint and partial; he directs nothing and says but little; once or twice he appears indistinctly and for a brief space, and at a remote distance from the

* Open Piracy is represented in the Odyssey as a perfectly honorable and acknowledged profession or mode of living. Nestor to Telemachus, and Ulysses to Eumæus.

† Il. γ'. xx. 24.

‡ Il. θ'. viii. 18—28.

§ E'. xiv. 352.

Earth and its affairs; and throughout these passages, and indeed throughout the poem, the governing supremacy of Jupiter is less striking, and the individual personality of the Gods less sensible, whilst something of the blissful inactivity of an Epicurean heaven seems to have become the portion of all the fierce and ever restless divinities of the *Iliad*. Minerva alone interferes with any effect in the conduct of the poem; but how different a being is she here from the strong and dreadful Pallas of the *Iliad*! She is ever at the ear or in the mind of Ulysses, more like his familiar spirit than a directing Goddess; her bodily lineaments are so indistinctly drawn, and her personal presence so little felt, that it is often difficult to consider her in any other light than as the allegorized Understanding or Reasoning Faculty; and though Eustathius and the Scholiasts do certainly not allow for some necessary and evident exceptions to this line of interpretation, the Student will probably in most instances be content to acquiesce in it, and will at least perceive with how much more probability it may be applied in general to the superhuman machinery of the *Odyssey* than to that of the *Iliad*.

Another very remarkable feature of distinction in the *Odyssey* is the appearance, for the first time, of the system of Apotheosis of mortals; a doctrine which became strictly orthodox in later

ages, and remained so till the establishment of Christianity, but of which no traces whatever are perceptible in the *Iliad*. This is so singular an innovation that it deserves very particular attention, and may seem almost to demonstrate the fact of a considerable lapse of time from the composition of the elder poem. In the *Iliad*, Castor and Pollux are spoken of in the ordinary language denoting common death and burial and no more;—

— Τὸς δ' ἤδη κάτεχε φυσίζοος αἶα
ἐν Λακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐνὶ πατρίδι γαίῃ.*

But they long since under life-breeding earth
In Lacedæmon lay, their place of birth.

In the *Odyssey* we have the account of their alternate resuscitation, which finally became the popular fable:—

Τὸς ἄμφω ζωὸς κατέχει φυσίζοος αἶα
οἳ καὶ νέρθεν γῆς τιμὴν πρὸς Ζηνὸς ἔχοντες,
ἄλλοτε μὲν ζῶουσ' ἑτερήμεροι, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
τεθναῖσιν' τιμὴν δὲ λελόγχασ' ἴσα θεοῖσιν.†

“ They prisoners in the fertile womb of earth,
Though living, dwell, and ever there from Jove
High privilege gain;—alternate they revive
And die, and dignity partake divine.”—*Cowper*.

So in that uncommonly splendid passage in the *Odyssey* which has been called spurious, where Ulysses sees Hercules, the apotheosis of the hero is expressly mentioned, and the inconceivable dis-

* Il. r'. iii. 243.

† Od. A'. xi. 300.

inction between the Idolon and the Self of the translated mortal is laid down:—

——— εἰσενόησα βίην Ἡρακληεῖην,
εἶδωλον' αὐτὸς δὲ μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
τέρπεται ἐν θαλίῃς, καὶ ἔχει καλλίσφυρον Ἥβην,
παῖδα Διὸς μέγαλοιο καὶ Ἥρης χρυσοπεδίλου.
ἀμφὶ δὲ μιν κλαγγὴ νεκύων ἦν, οἰωνῶν ὥς,
πάντοσ' ἀτυζομένων ὁδ', ἐρεμνῇ νυκτὶ ἐοικώς,
γυμνὸν τόξον ἔχων, καὶ ἐπὶ νευρῇφιν οὔστον,
δεινὸν παπταίνων, αἰεὶ βαλέοντι ἐοικώς.*

“The might of Hercules I, next, surveyed—
His semblance;—for Himself their banquet shares
With the immortal Gods, and in his arms
Enfolds neat-footed Hebe, daughter fair
Of Jove and of his golden-sandal'd spouse.
Around him, clamorous as birds, the Dead
Swarm'd turbulent:—he, gloomy-brow'd as night,
With uncased bow and arrow on the string
Peer'd terrible from side to side, as one
Ever in act to shoot.”

Cowper.

But in the *Iliad*, although Hercules and his exploits are repeatedly mentioned, and sometimes under circumstances which would seem almost necessarily to call for an allusion to his apotheosis, as in the dialogue between Sarpedon and Tlepolemus,† there is no expression to denote a belief in any such extraordinary event; whilst on the contrary he is constantly spoken of as a man, and classed with the other heroes of the preceding age. The Demigod is evidently a subsequent

* *Od. A'*. xi. 600.

† *Il. E'*. v. 633.

creation, and in this as well as in every other instance of discrepancy or change in the two poems, we find that the *Iliad* is the most distant from, and the *Odyssey* the nearest to, the known opinions and habits of the post-Homeric age.

Oracle at
Delphi.

In Mr. R. P. Knight's opinion* the *Oracle* of Apollo at Delphi was not in existence when the *Iliad* was composed. It seems a doubtful point. The Oracle of Jupiter at Dodona appears to be expressly mentioned,† and the splendor and riches of the *Temple* of Apollo at Delphi are certainly spoken of‡ as proverbial; but in the *Odyssey*, at least, we have an unequivocal proof of the notoriety of the Pythian Oracle and the appropriate terms of vaticination used with the distinction well known in after-times:—

ὥς γάρ οἱ ΧΡΕΙΩΝ μνθήσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ, ὅθ' ὑπέρβη λάϊνον οὐδὸν
ΧΡΗΣΟΜΕΝΟΣ.§

"For so Apollo, *answering oracularly*, declared to him when he crossed the marble threshold for the purpose of *consulting the oracle*."

* Prolegomena in Hom.

† Il. II'. xvi. 235.

‡ Il. I'. ix. 404.

§ Od. ε'. viii. 79. It may be worth noticing, that throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* Phœbus or Apollo are never mentioned as identical with the Sun, or as having anything to do with it, as in the more modern mythology. The Sun, "ἥλιος, is always introduced distinctly, and perhaps always as the natural body only. Il. P'. xvii. 649. Od. ε'. viii. 302, and see verse 323, where Apollo is evidently in another interest.

But the most remarkable passage in the whole Necyomanteia.
 Odyssey for the aspect which it presents of its
 Mythology, is that magnificent episode of the
 Necyomanteia, or intercourse of Ulysses with the
 Shades of the Dead.* It is very easy to call
 the whole or any part of this singular description
 spurious, and certainly the passage as a whole is
 so conceived, as to admit of parts being inserted or
 expunged without injury to its general consistency
 or entireness; but surely those who remember the
 history of the collection of the Homeric poems,
 the custom and manner of recitation by the Rhapsodists,
 the different copies concurrently existing
 in various parts of ancient Greece, and the boundless
 license apparently exercised by Aristarchus
 and the Alexandrian critics in compiling the last
 and now received text, will think it very idle to
 pretend to put out a few lines here and there,
 which may seem to bear marks of modern invention.
 The Necyomanteia, as a whole, appears to
 have just as good a right to be called Homeric as
 any other part of the Odyssey, and it is the conception
 of it, as a whole, to which I would call the attention
 of the Student. The entire narration is wrapped up
 in such a mist—it is so undefined and absolutely
 undefinable in place, time and manner—that it should
 almost seem as if the uncertainty of the Poet's own
 knowledge of the

* Od. Δ'. xi.

state and locality of the Dead were meant to be indicated by the indistinctness of his description. Ulysses sails all day from the dwelling of Circe with a north wind; at sunset he comes to the boundary of the Ocean, where the Cimmerians dwell in cloud and darkness and perpetual night; here he goes ashore, and proceeds to a spot described by Circe, digs a trench, pours certain libations and sacrifices sheep in it, calls upon the Dead to appear, draws his sword and awaits the event. Immediately the Manes or Shades assemble around the trench, each thirsting for the sacrificial blood, from which they are repelled by the sword's point, till Tiresias has appeared and drunk his fill. It is difficult to determine the real nature of this grand and solemn scene, and to say whether Ulysses is supposed himself to descend to Hades or only to evoke* the Spirits, as the Woman of Endor is generally understood to have evoked Samuel. Æneas, we know, actually descends and ascends; and Lucian, in a piece† founded entirely on this Necyomanteia, evidently takes the hero to have visited the infernal regions in person. In many passages it seems necessary so to understand it; Ulysses *sees* Minos adminis-

* ———— "cruor in fossam confusus, ut inde
Manes elicerent, animas responsa daturas."

Hor. Sat. I. viii. 28.

† Necyomanteia.

tering justice amongst the Dead; he *sees* Orion hunting, Tityus tormented by vultures, Tantalus standing in the lake, and Sisyphus up-heaving his stone; he *sees* the asphodel meadow, and Achilles asks how he has dared to *descend* to Hades *where* the Shades of Men dwell. Yet upon a careful consideration of the beginning and conclusion of the passage, it will, I think, appear plain that no actual descent, such as that of Æneas in the Æneid, was in the contemplation of the original poet; but that the whole ground-plan is that of an act of Asiatic Evocation only, and Lucian, who in his piece combines the Homeric rites of Evocation with an actual Descent, makes the Evocator a Babylonian and disciple of Zoroaster, and lays the scene somewhere on the banks of the Euphrates. The whole of this Necyomanteia is indeed of a character quite unique in Greek poetry; and is, amongst other things, remarkable for the dreary and even terrible revelation which it makes of the condition of the Future Life. All is cold and dark; hunger and thirst and discontent prevail; we hear nothing of Elysian fields for piety, or wisdom, or valor; and there is something quite deadening in the answer of the Shade of Achilles to the consolations of Ulysses:—

Μὴ δὴ μοι θάνατόν γε παραύδα, φαίδιμ' Ὀδυσσεῦ·
βουλοίμην κ' ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θηγευέμεν ἄλλω

ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρῳ, ᾧ μὴ βίσιος πολὺς εἴη,
ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.*

"Talk not of ruling in this dolorous gloom,
Nor think vain words (he cried,) can ease my doom.
Rather I choose laboriously to bear
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,
Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead."

Pope.

This is one of the passages which called down the censure of Plato;† and indeed how cheering a contrast to this gloomy picture is presented by the gentle and pious imagination of Pindar!‡ A

* Od. Δ'. xi. 487.

† Republ. III.

‡ Ἴσον δὲ νύκτεσσιν αἰεὶ,
Ἴσα δ' ἐν ἡμέραις ἄλι-
ον ἔχοντες, ἀπονέστερον
Ἑσθλοὶ νέμονται βί-
τον.

Olymp. II. 109.

By night, by day,
The glorious Sun
Shines equal, where the Blest,
Their labors done,
Repose for ever in unbroken rest.

Homer himself elsewhere speaks of the Elysian Plain, and places it in some remote part of the Earth; a Paradise, however, with him, of translated mortals rather than of the virtuous Dead.

Ἄλλ' αὖ σ' ἐς Ἠλύσιον πεδὶν καὶ πείρατα γαίης
Ἀθάνατοι πέμψουσιν, ἔθι ξανθὸς Ῥαδάμανθυς·
Τῇ περ ῥήστῃ βιοτὴ πέλει ἀνθρώποισιν·
Οὐ νιφετὸς, οὔτ' ἄρ' χειμῶν πολὺς, οὔτε πόντ' ὄμβρος,
Ἄλλ' αἰεὶ Ζεφύριον λογυπνέοντας αἴετας
ᾠκεανὸς αἰήσιν, ἀναφύχειν ἀνθρώπους.— Δ'. iv. 563-8.

curious particular in this scene, not unknown in other superstitions, should be observed—that most of the Ghosts, fleshless and boneless though they be, cannot recognise or speak to Ulysses until they have drunk of the blood in the trench. Even his mother does not know him before she has slaked her thirst.

The Plan and contexture of the *Odyssey* are Plan. materially different from those of the *Iliad*, and the difference seems to import a great advance in the *art* of composition. In this poem the order of narration is no longer confined to the straight-forward line of a single series of events, as in the *Iliad*; but we have two corresponding, though distinct, parts, proceeding at first in parallel directions, but at length meeting and constituting the entire body of the story in the house of Eumæus.

Thus beautifully translated by Abraham Moore:—

Thee to th' Elysian plain, earth's farthest end,
Where Rhadamanthus dwells, the gods shall send ;
Where mortals easiest pass the careless hour ;
No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower ;
But Ocean ever, to refresh mankind,
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind.

Bochart derives 'Ελύσιον from the Phœnician *Elysoth*—Joy. It is clear, upon a long comparison, that almost all the Homeric names of places or persons to the West of Greece are Phœnician in their etymology ; indeed it was from the Phœnicians alone that any Greek of the age of Homer could learn any thing about them. Cadiz and the plains of Andalucia seem to have the best claim to be the Elysium of Homer. It is said that the Moors of Africa to this day pray every Friday to be restored to the Paradise of Granada and Malaga.

Whatever doubt there may be as to the nature of the authorship, or the number of the authors, of the *Iliad*, no one can for a moment question the composition of the *Odyssey* by an individual Poet. There is almost as obvious a necessity for supposing one Homer for this poem as one Sophocles for the *Œdipus Tyrannus*. The extremely artificial manner in which the narrative by Ulysses of his adventures is managed, its introduction, its breaks, its references to what has gone before, and its intimations of what is to follow, are all striking instances; whilst at the same time the incomparably natural air which surrounds the whole scene, the apparent veracity and personal feeling of the speaker, and the impression made on the audience, stamp upon this episode an originality and real interest which render it by far the most delightful, as it is by far the most ancient, of these subsequently favorite complements of the Heroic Poem. The perfect propriety and easy order of every part of the *Odyssey* are in most agreeable contrast with all the many servile imitations in the Epic poems of subsequent ages; narrative and dialogue alternate precisely as the exigencies of a story, conceived in a true spirit of nature, and told exactly as a man of imagination would tell a romantic matter of fact, seem to require; and the comparative absence of mere poetic splendor renders more apparent and more

fascinating the great and peculiar charm of this delightful poem—its uncommon air of truth and reality. Indeed it is as a Book of Adventures that the Odyssey is presented to us in its proper and most pleasing light; it is in fact of the same nature, and possesses the same interest, as Robinson Crusoe or Sinbad the Sailor, but heightened by an object, and dignified by a morality, infinitely transcending the reach of those two favorite compositions. Hence it may be noticed that, whilst in the Iliad we are for the most part sensible of a prominence of the *poetry* as such, to that degree that almost any single Book or Rhapsody may be read with perfect delight, without reference to any thing that has gone before or is to follow, the very passage we are repeating completely satisfying the mind by its nobleness of sentiment, its picturesqueness of imagery or even its melody of words—in the Odyssey, on the contrary, though it contains many instances of extraordinary vigor of conception and splendor of verse, we are more constantly attracted, and our attention more completely kept alive, by the linked sweetness and long drawn-out interest of the Story itself,—our Curiosity or our Affections being in turn or together so delightfully stimulated and gratified, that, even where the higher powers of the Imagination are not put forth, we lose all unpleasant sense of their abeyance in the perception

Plan and
Character
of the Po-
etry.

of a gentler, a more continuous and a more varied pleasure.

Never was there a Tale in verse or prose told with such consummate art; yet the hand of the Artist is invisible. The conduct of the story seems, and is, simple and single; but it is the simplicity and singleness of Nature, which co-exists with, indeed is the wondrous effect of, an endless complexity of parts;—

——— “*sudet multum, frustra que laboret*
Ausus idem.”

No where is this charm so strongly felt as in that delightful part of the poem in which Ulysses is lodged in the house of the faithful Eumæus; there is that singular grace in the description of the rustic occupations and the rustic mansion—that dignity in the Swineherd—that native tone of command in Telemachus—and that sportive humility varying with a mysterious majesty in Ulysses, which seem quite beyond the reach of the most poetic invention or the most ingenious imitation. The air of reality around the whole scene is such, that it is scarcely possible to doubt that the poet wrote under the control of actual life, and that the picture itself is in this respect a mere stamp or reflection of contemporary society. In the *Æneid* and in every other heroic poem, composed in an age long subsequent to that in which the action of the story is supposed to have taken place, the

greatest difficulty in the poet's way may be said to lie in a consistent adaptation and a natural propriety of Manners; not the moral qualities—the Passions and the Sentiments; for *they* are in substance the same in every age and place, and differ only occasionally in their stimulants and objects; but the habits, the courtesies, the domestic relations, the tone between husband and wife, master and servant, stranger and friend,—these are the peculiarities of particular times and countries; and when a system of manners in this sense is to be *adapted* to a story of a *former* age and perhaps *foreign* nation, the utmost that can be done seems to be to avoid any glaring anachronisms or absurd improbabilities, whilst the ease, the life, the force, which can alone be given where the poet paints his own manners and the habits of his own contemporaries, may be pronounced to be absolutely beyond the power of the liveliest ingenuity. I know no heroic poems except the Iliad, the Odyssey and the Poem of the Cid, in which the manners are the genuine manners of the poets' own years of the world; in all others they are mere conventional fictions, fitting all stories equally, like state robes, because exactly fitting none, and under the cumbrous folds of which all grace and nature, and spirit of human action, are stifled altogether or allowed to breathe out but at intervals. This facility and freedom from constraint, the effect of

actual contemporary existence, is more singularly conspicuous to us in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*; because in the former poem we are presented with a complete picture of rural and domestic life in connection with the heroic events of the story, and this picture for various reasons has not been copied with that remorseless iteration, with which the battles and speeches and warlike habits of the *Iliad* have, with more or less success, been redrawn and recolored in almost every epic composition for the last two thousand years. The adventure with Nausicaa, the various scenes in the house of Eumæus, the walk to the town, the banqueting, the watching by night and many other passages of what may be called the private life of the Homeric age, have scarcely in any instance suited the plans of more recent poets, and consequently remain in all their original freshness to us even at this day. Indeed the *Odyssey*, as a poem, is absolutely unique; for, although Virgil certainly and perhaps even Tasso have borrowed particular passages from it more largely than from the *Iliad*, (a fact not commonly noticed,) the character and scope of their great poems are utterly dissimilar to those of the *Odyssey*, which consist in raising an interest about, and in detailing the changing fortunes of, a single man, not as a General warring with armies against a city, but as an Exile compassing by his own courage, and skill and patience,

the return to, and repossession of, his own home. It is in the rare combination or intermingling of all

——— “hair-breadth ’scapes

And moving accidents by flood or field”

with the high moral purpose of Ulysses—in the contrast of the one determined and still triumphant will of the man with the transient and vain bafflings of winds or waves, of gods or monsters—the whole action lightened by the gladsome face of Nature, and yet rendered awful by the known approaching execution of a heavenly decree, and by the mysterious tokens, and the dangerous odds, and the terrible vengeance attending on the last and crowning achievement of the Hero, that the secret of the character of the *Odyssey*, and the spring of its universal charm, lie concealed;—a secret which deserves the study of the philosopher—a charm which the hearts of all men feel, and over which Time and Place have no dominion.

The prominent characters of the *Odyssey* are less numerous than those of the *Iliad*. With the exception of the exquisite sketches of Helen and Nausicaa,—Ulysses, Penelope, Telemachus and Eumæus are the only figures that stand in relief during the greater part of the poem. Of these Ulysses is, beyond all comparison, the most important and the most interesting. He is rather

Characters.

Ulysses.

than like, the Ulysses of the Iliad, and in all respects to be more in his own genuine nature than in the midst of adventures and tempests, and in disguise, than when openly counselling and fighting on the plain of Tröy. Not that he for a moment becomes the mean, cunning, pusillanimous creature which Sophocles* represents him—very far from it:—but still he is a hero contending with want, and weakness, and the embarrassments of ordinary life; and the circumstances in which he is successively placed call forth a liveliness, a variety and a versatility of genius in him which is strongly contrasted with the more uniform aspect of his character in the Iliad. In his speeches, his conduct, and the sway he acquires and maintains over all around him, we perceive the man of genius as well as the hero; he surpasses all the Phæacians in his eloquence more than he beats them at quoits, and it is easy to conceive the feelings of pride and delight with which Arete bursts forth at the conclusion of the first part of the narrative of his adventures:—

Φαίηκες, πῶς ὕμῶν ἀνὴρ ὅγε φαίνεται εἶναι,
εἰδός τε, μέγεθός τε, ἰδὲ φρένας ἔνδον εἴσας;
ξεῖνος δ' αὖτ' ἐμός ἐστιν.†

Phæacians! how appears he in your eyes,
This stranger—graceful as he is in port,

* Philoctetes.

† A'. xi. 335-7.

In stature noble, and in mind discreet!
My guest he is!—*Comper.*

It is particularly worthy of notice that in no instance have the authors of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* shown any disposition to draw what is called a perfect character; we meet with no Paragons either of virtue or vice—those fictions of a cloistered imagination; but man is represented as man always, and indeed is, full of inequalities and apparent inconsistencies, the effects of the flooding and ebbing, the winds and the currents, of the Passions; he is made to act on the most popular motives, he avails himself of the most obvious means, he sorrows or rejoices as the most natural emotions prompt him. “The natural Greek in Homer’s days,” says the author of the interesting *Inquiry into the Life and Writings of this Poet*,* “covered none of his sentiments. He frankly owned the pleasures of Love and Wine; he told how voraciously he ate when he was hungry, and how horribly he was frightened when he saw an approaching danger; he looked upon no means as base to escape it, and was not at all ashamed to relate the trick or fetch that had brought him off; while the haughty Roman, who scorned to owe his life to anything but his virtue and fortitude, despised accidental escapes and fortuitous relief

* P. 340.

in perils, and snuffed at the suppleness and levity of mind necessary to put them in practice." Horace justly remarks* that Homer

Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulyssem—

an imitable example of what courage, talent and perseverance are capable of effecting; and in thought, manner, word and deed the perfect opposite of the Knight-errant. He courts danger, indeed, once or twice rather more than prudence would allow, but it must be acknowledged that the provocation† was very tempting to a man of fighting habits; in general, however, Ulysses acts like an old soldier, aware of his own value, and never disregarding the odds of number or place. Yet he never seems, under any circumstances, however unfavorable, to be less than a hero of the right Homeric stamp; and I doubt if we are ever more sensible of a certain majesty inherent in him than when we see him in rags, a beggar and a laughing-stock in his own house. We fancy we see the keen eye of the Avenger gleaming forth from amidst the gray hairs and the worn features under which the genuine countenance lay shrouded, whilst he counts the heads of his destined victims, and waits in patience till his hour arrives. When Antinous strikes him on the back, he stands unshaken, like a rock, ἥϊτε πέτρῃ,‡ and

* Ep. I. 2.

† M. xiii. 338.

‡ P. xviii. 462-5.

speaks with such gravity and reason, that he evidently draws the majority of the suitors to his side; but the repeated insolence of the contemptible Melanthius falls like a leaf on the deep stream of his thought, and sinks not:—

—— τὸν δ' οὔτι προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς,
ἀλλ' ἄκέων κίνησε κάρη, κακὰ βυσσοδομένων.*

———— Him the Hero answered not,
But silent shook his brows, and dreadful deeds
Of vengeance ruminated.—*Comper.*

And when the no less contemptible Ctesippus hurls an ox's joint at him, he just sufficiently declines his head, and grimly smiles *in his heart* at the thought of the coming revenge:—

———— μείδῃσε δὲ θυμῷ
Σαρδάνιον μάλα τοῖον.†

———— with a broad sardonic smile,
Of dread significance.—*Comper.*

With all this, there is a prevailing cheerfulness of manner, and ever and anon an expression of earnest remonstrance and moral speculation, which in a moment reveals the philosophical observer of the course of human life. His warning speech to Amphinomus, whom he wishes to exempt from his meditated destruction of the other suitors, is admirably conceived in a strain of mysterious intimation of the future event, and draws up still

* γ'. xx. 183-4.

† γ'. xx. 299—302.

farther the veil which concealed the returned Ulysses from the eyes of the infatuated intruders on his home:—

Οἳ δ' ὄρω, μνηστῆρας ἀτάσθαλα μηχανώοντας,
κτῆματα κείροντας, καὶ ἀτιμάζοντας ἄκοιτιν
ἄνδρες, ὃν οὐκ ἔτι φημι φίλων καὶ πατρίδος αἵης
δῆρ' ὄν ἀπέσσεσθαι· μάλα δὲ σχεδόν· ἀλλὰ σε δαίμων
οἴκαδ' ὑπεξαγάγοι, μῆδ' ἀντιάσειας ἐκείνῳ,
ὅππότε νοστήσειε φίλῃν ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν·
οὐ γὰρ ἀναιμωτεῖ γε διακρινέεσθαι οἷῳ
μνηστῆρας, κκεῖνον, ἐπεὶ κε μέλαθρον ὑπέλθοι.*

So do not these. These ever bent I see
On deeds injurious—the possessions large
Consuming, and dishonoring the wife
Of one, who will not, as I judge, remain
Long absent from his home, but is, perchance,
Even at the door. Thee, therefore, may the Gods
Steal hence in time!—ah! meet not his return
To his own country!—for they will not part
(He and the suitors) without blood, I think,
If once he enters at these gates again.—*Comper.*

One marked difference between the Iliad and the Odyssey consists in this, that in the former poem there is no hero in the modern sense of the term; no one person to whom every thing is referred, and whose actions and words, whose dangers and success, constitute the substance and the object of the poem. The impression of Achilles is very faint upon nearly one half of the Iliad, and

* Σ' i. xviii. 142-9.

Diomed, Ajax and Hector distract at least, if they do not usurp, the real interest felt by the reader. The poem is not an *Achilleid*, but an *Iliad*, as it was very rightly named by early antiquity. But the *Odyssey* or *Ulysseid* is a story exclusively concerning, and devoted to the honor of, the one man Ulysses; every event is connected, all men are compared, with him; weeping or stern, patient or furious, silent or speaking, swimming or fighting, naked or in rags, in robes or in armour—he is ever before our eyes in some shape or other—the central heart, from which life-blood flows into every the minutest vein and vesicle of the entire poem. We read the *Iliad* in much the same spirit and manner with which we read one of the brilliant, lifesome, historical plays of Shakspeare; which may be taken up and laid down in any part without injury to our pleasure, and where a Henry, a Harry, a Hotspur, and a Glendower, or a Douglas, are so many centres, to each of which our affections are attracted in turn. But the reader of the *Odyssey* is irresistibly drawn on by the never-intermitting magic of Ulysses' name; he craves for the constant presence of the wise and adventurous Greek as he is accustomed to do for the appearance of Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello and Lear; one great and superior nature absorbs the attention, concentrates and points the Imagination, and gives an intellectual Desire which a per-

petual beholding of its own greatness can alone gratify. The character of Ulysses is in itself the perfect Idea of an accomplished Man of the World after the manner of the ancient Paganism, and, like all Ideas, in the original and true sense of that word, it not only fills and satisfies, but also gives a vital, energetic, realizing power to, the mind that completely apprehends it. Let a person, after having read the Iliad and the Odyssey, reflect for a while on the totally different impressions made on his imagination by the two names of Achilles and Ulysses, and I believe he will fully conceive the meaning and the verity of the distinction which I have here noticed. No one of the characters in the Iliad, with, perhaps, the exception of Hector, satisfies the mind *in and by itself*; every one of them is regarded collaterally with, or in contrast to, another of them, and the pleasure we receive is the mixed result of the action of all; but Ulysses in the Odyssey shines by his own light, moves by his own strength, and demolishes all obstacles by his own arm and his own wit; he receives no lustre from mere contrast; we admire his force, not his success; his battle, not his victory; his heroism, and not his triumph alone; we refer others to him, but we refer Ulysses to himself. He is his own parallel. Ever excepting the great intellectual creations of Shakspeare, I think the Ulysses of the Odyssey

CHARACTERS—ULYSSES.

the most perfect, the most *entire*, conception of character to be found any where in mere human literature.

A thoroughly great man of the world is an object to dazzle the imagination rather than to touch the heart; some *passion* is requisite for the purpose of engaging our affections as well as our intellect. Accordingly Ulysses *has* a passion, a vehement desire; he is very tender upon one point, and that one precisely upon which it is a virtue and a glory for a great man to be susceptible even to his own hindrance. Ulysses is homesick; he longs for Ithaca and his own fireside. This brings him at once in contact with the common feelings of every man in the world. For this he willingly encounters hunger, and thirst, and toil, and the hazard of death; and for this he foregoes animated youth and the love of a Goddess, and foregoes them with joy. How beautifully is all this expressed in the following passages:—

Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς εὗρε καθήμενον· οὐδέ ποτ' ὅσσε
δακρύφιν τέρσοντο· κατείβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν
νόστον ὀδυρομένων, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἦνδανε νύμφη.
ἀλλ' ἦτοι νύκτας μὲν ἰάυεσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη
ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθελούσῃ
ἤματα δ' ἐν πέτρῃσι καὶ ἡϊόνεσσι καθίζων,
δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων,
πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο, δάκρυα λείβων.
ἀγχού δ' ἰσταμένη προσεφώνεε δια θεάων·

Κάμμορε, μή μοι ἔτ' ἐνθάδ' ὀδύρεο, μηδέ τοι αἰὼν
φθινέντω· ἦδη γάρ σε μάλα πρόφρασσ' ἀποπέμψω.*

* * * * *

οὕτω δὴ οἰκόνδε φίλην, ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν
αὐτίκα νῦν ἐθέλεις ἰέναι ; σὺ δὲ χαῖρε καὶ ἔμπησ'
εἴγε μὲν εἰδείης σῆσι φρεσίν, ὅσσα τοι αἴσα
κῆδ' ἀναπλῆσαι, πρὶν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἰέσθαι,
ἐνθάδε αὖθι μένων σὺν ἐμοὶ τόδε δῶμα φυλάσσοις
ἀθάνατός τ' εἴης· ἰμειρόμενός περ ἰδέσθαι
σὴν ἄλοχον, τῆς αἰὲν ἐέλδεοι ἥματα πάντα.
οὐ μὲν θην κείνης γὰρ χερείων εὖχομαι εἶναι,
οὐ δέμας, οὐδὲ φῦήν· ἐπεὶ οὐπὼς οὐδὲ ἔοικεν
θνητὰς ἀθανάτησι δέμας καὶ εἶδος ἐρίζειν.

Τὴν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς.
πότνια θεά, μή μοι τόδε χῶεο· οἶδα δὲ αὐτὸς
πάντα μάλ', οὐνεκα σείο περίφρων Πηνελόπεια
εἶδος ἀκιδνοτέρη, μέγεθός τ', εἰς ἅντα ἰδέσθαι.
(ἦ μὲν γὰρ βροτός ἐστι, σὺ δ' ἀθάνατος καὶ ἀγήρως)
ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς ἐθέλω καὶ ἐέλδομαι ἥματα πάντα
οἰκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι, καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι.
εἰ δ' αὖ τις βραῖησι θεῶν ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντῳ,
τλήσομαι, ἐν στήθεσιν ἔχων ταλαπενθέα θυμόν·
ἦδη γὰρ μάλα πόλλ' ἔπαθον καὶ πόλλ' ἐμόγησα
κύμασι καὶ πολέμῳ· μετὰ καὶ τόδε τυῖσι γενέσθω.†

“ On the shore
She found him seated ; tears succeeding tears
Delug'd his eyes, while, hopeless of return,
Life's precious hours to gnawing cares he gave
Continual, with the nymph now charm'd no more.
Yet, cold as she was am'rous, still he pass'd
His nights beside her in the hollow grove,

* E. v. 151-8.

† E. v. 204-24.

Constrain'd, and day by day the rocks among,
Which lined the shore, heart-broken sat, and oft,
While wistfully he eyed the barren Deep,
Wept, groan'd, desponded, sigh'd and wept again.
Then, drawing near, thus spake the nymph divine.

“ Unhappy! weep not here, nor life consume
In anguish; go; thou hast my glad consent.”

* * * * *

“ Oh, canst thou thus resolve
To seek, incontinent, thy native shores?
I pardon thee. Farewell! but could'st thou guess
The woes which Fate ordains thee to endure
Ere yet thou reach thy country, well-content
Here to inhabit, thou would'st keep my grot
And be immortal, howsoe'er thy wife
Engage thy every wish day after day.
Yet can I not in stature or in form
Myself suspect inferior aught to her,
Since competition cannot be between
Mere mortal beauties, and a form divine.”

To whom Ulysses, ever wise, replied:—
“ Awful Divinity! be not incensed!—
I know that my Penelope in form
And stature altogether yields to thee,
For she is mortal, and immortal thou,
From age exempt; yet not the less I wish
My home, and languish daily to return.
But should some God amid the sable Deep
Dash me again into a wreck, my soul
Shall bear *that* also.”—*Comper*.

Penelope does not interest us in an equal de- Penelope.
gree with her husband. She is chaste and pru-

dent, but as Ulysses scruples not to accept the favors of Calypso* and Circe,† so she evidently goes considerable lengths in the way of coquetry with her suitors. Antinous declares in public that she had made promises to every one of them and had sent messages to them:‡ she undoubtedly wishes earnestly for her husband's return, and seems sincere in her dislike of the prospect of a second marriage; nevertheless she is not insensible to the charm of being admired and sought after, and does not appear very seriously angry at the boldness of Antinous and the others, to which, it should seem, she might have put a stop by removing to her father's house, as Telemachus repeatedly hints she ought to do, and then choosing or refusing a husband as she pleased. She permits the constant spoil and dilapidation of her husband's or son's substance, and even the life of the latter to be perpetually exposed to danger from the violence and the hostility of men whom, according to their own frequent professions, she had the means of leading in another direction. Yet it is possible that the general coldness, and even dryness, of the character of Penelope make us feel with a livelier sympathy the beautifully imagined scene of her recognition of Ulysses—the surprise, the joy, the doubt, the slow conviction,

* E'. v. 226-7.

† K'. x. 347.

‡ E'. ii. 91-2.

and the final burst of tenderness and love. It is in this most exquisite passage that we again perceive the hand or hands which drew the domestic fondness of Andromache and the matronly elegance of Helen, and have left all three as convincing proofs that matchless delicacy, and gentleness and truth were placed by poets in the bosom of Woman, in an age in which the boasted refinements and graces of modern society were utterly unknown.

Τῆς δ' αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ
σῆματ' ἀναγνούσῃ, τὰ οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς.
δακρύσασα δ' ἔπειτ' ἰθὺς δράμεν, ἀμφὶ δὲ χεῖρας
δεῖπν' βάλλ' Ὀδυσσῇ, κάρη δ' ἔκυσ', ἥδ' ἐπροσηύδα.

Μή μοι, Ὀδυσσεῦ, σκύζεν, ἐπεὶ τὰ περ ἄλλα μάλιστα
ἀνθρώπων πέπνυσσ'· θεοὶ δ' ὤπαζον οἷζύν,
οἱ νῶϊν ἀγάσαντο παρ' ἀλλήλοισι μένοντε
ἤβης ταρπῆναι, καὶ γήραος οὐδὸν ἰκέσθαι.
αὐτὰρ μὴ νῦν μοι τόδε χῶεο, μηδὲ νεμέσσα,
οὐνεκα σ' οὐ τὸ πρῶτον, ἐπεὶ ἴδον, ὦδ' ἀγάπησα·
αἶετ γάρ μοι θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλοισιν
ἐρρίγει, μή τις με βροτῶν ἀπάφοιτ' ἐπέεσσιν
ἔλθῶν.*

He ceased ; she, conscious of the sign so plain
Giv'n by Ulysses, heard with fluttering heart
And fault'ring knees that proof. Weeping she ran
Direct toward him, threw her arms around
The Hero, kissed his forehead, and replied.

Ah, my Ulysses ! pardon me ! frown not—
Thou, who at other times hast ever shown

* γ'. xxiii. 205-17.

Superior wisdom! All our griefs have flow'd
 From the Gods' will! They envied us the bliss
 Of undivided union, sweet enjoyed
 Through life, from early youth to latest age.
 No. Be not angry now;—pardon the fault
 That I embrac'd thee not as soon as seen;—
 For horror hath not ceas'd to overwhelm
 My soul, lest some false alien might, perchance,
 Beguile me. *Comper.*

Telemachus. Telemachus is very skilfully drawn, so as to be always subordinate to his father, and yet sufficiently full of promise and opening prowess to justify his heroic blood, and to give him a becoming eminence amongst the other characters of the poem; and when this is carried so far as to represent him, a mere youth, on the point of bending the bow,* which the Suitors were unable to achieve, the real improbability is lost in a sense of poetical propriety, whilst at the same time his instantaneous submission to his father's nod replaces him in that relation of filial inferiority and obedience in which he is always meant permanently to be viewed. Yet Telemachus is not a pleasing character on the whole; his demeanor towards his mother, notwithstanding some occasional expressions of kindness, is generally unaffectionate, and there is sometimes what might be called an interested disposition manifested by him, which prevents us from fully sympathizing in his

* *Φ'*. xxi. 128.

long-cherished wishes for his father's return. This however must be said, that the strength of his character opens as the action of the poem advances, and in the latter books, after he is intrusted with the secret of the hero's return, he seems to have a dignity and an energy imparted to him beyond his natural powers. There is one very charming passage, in some sense connected with the delineation of his character, which leads me just to notice the easy and genuine manners of old Euryclea the nurse; it is where she *puts* Euryclea. Telemachus *to bed* (if I may use such a nursery phrase), and folds and hangs up his clothes in a way that might satisfy the most careful mother of the present day.

"Ἡ οἱ ἄμ' αἰθομένας δαΐδας φέρε, καί ἐ μάλιστα
 δμῶων φιλέεσκε, καὶ ἔτρεφε τυτθὸν ἑόντα.
 ὥϊεν δέ θύρας θαλάμου πύκα ποιητοῖο·
 ἔζετο δ' ἐν λέκτρῳ, μαλακὸν δ' ἔκδυε χιτῶνα·
 καὶ τὸν μὲν γραίης πυκιμηδέος ἔμβαλε χερσίν.
 ἦ μὲν τὸν πτύξασα καὶ ἀσκήσασα χιτῶνα,
 πασσάλῳ ἀγκρεμάσασα παρὰ τρητοῖσι λέχεσσι,
 βῆ ῥ' ἵμεν ἐκ θαλάμοιο· θύρην δ' ἐπέρυσσε κορώνῃ
 ἀργυρῇ· ἐπὶ δὲ κλῆϊδ' ἐτάνυσσεν ἱμάντι.*

She bore the torches, and with truer heart
 Lov'd him than any of the female train,
 For she had nurs'd him in his infant years.
 He open'd his broad chamber-valves, and sat
 On his couch-side; then, putting off his vest

* A. i. 434.

Of softest texture, plac'd it in the hands
Of the attendant dame discreet, who, first
Folding it with exactest care, beside
His bed suspended it, and going forth
Drew by its silver ring the portal close,
And fasten'd it with bolt and brace secure.—*Cowper.*

Eumæus.

Eumæus is a character less within the reach of modern imitation than any other in the *Odyssey*. He is a genuine country gentleman of the age of Homer, living at a distance from the town, having servants or laborers under him, but being at the same time the principal herdsman and superintendant of the swine belonging to Ulysses, which of course constituted an important article of the hero's property. He had come a stranger to Ithaca, and Ulysses had been his patron and friend; these circumstances are evidently ingredients in the jealous dislike with which Melanthius and the suitors regard him. He is professedly of the old party, and is independent enough to be able to act boldly on his principles. The scenes in his house are unequalled in their way, and are as remarkably different from the poetical rusticities of Theocritus and Virgil as they are from the coarseness of real life passed in low country occupations. There is a dignity and a philosophical elevation given to Eumæus, which, without injuring the natural coloring of his manners, throw the light of poetry around them; and

after a very slight acquaintance with him, we repeat the *δῖος ὑφορβὸς* (divine or noble swineherd) and the *ῥρχαμος ἀνδρῶν* (leader of men), not only without any sense of ridiculous incongruity, but with a hearty feeling of their moral propriety. The character of Eumæus is a very complete conception, and a remarkably interesting specimen of rural life and its habits in the very remote age in which it was produced.

The story of the adventures of Ulysses and his companions with Circe* is not only picturesque and dramatic in the highest degree in itself, but also contains one of the most striking and complete allegories existing in the writings of any poet, ancient or modern. That we should give a moral application to this narrative seems reasonable, though perhaps Lord Bacon is right in thinking that Homer had no such inwardness in his own meaning.† In the course of their wanderings the hero and his companions arrive at a beautiful island, in the centre of which some of the party, who go out to explore, discover a mansion and the fair-haired Circe, or Pleasure, singing and weaving within. They are invited and enter in; a table richly spread is placed before them, and they all drink deep of the cup which Circe mixes and drugs for them. Then, in the height

Allegory—
Circe.

* *Kirkar* (Phœnician) to destroy or corrupt.—*Bochart*, Chan. I.

† *Adv. of Learning*, Vol. II.

of their revelling, she strikes them with a wand, and immediately they are changed into swine to all outward appearance—the human sense and identity remaining however within—and are driven out to grovel in the mire. One only, Eurylochus, escapes from this embruting of the soul by immediate *flight* before he has entered the palace, and he informs Ulysses of what has taken place. The Hero sets out with a determination to rescue his degraded friends and to subdue the Enchantress; but, whilst on the way, he is met by Mercury, the heavenly messenger, who warns him that his natural strength is insufficient to resist the allurements and magic power of the Goddess, and that without assistance he will share the same fate with his companions. Upon which Mercury picks from the ground the sacred herb Moly (Μῶλυ) or Temperance, and places it in the hands of Ulysses: this herb is black in the root, but bearing a flower as white as milk, and it lies so deeply buried in the earth that the Gods alone can procure it for man. Inly strengthened by the virtuous root and instructed how to act against the incantations of the deceitful Power, the Hero proceeds with a thoughtful mind to the beautiful and elaborate palace of Circe. He stands on the threshold and calls, and on the instant the Enchantress opens her shining portals and invites him in. She leads

him to a throne, sets viands before him, drugs the cup as before, and when she sees that Ulysses has drunk its contents, she strikes him with her wand, and bids him go and herd with his companions in the sty. But the intoxicating potion has not touched his sober soul, and at the word he springs upon the astonished Circe with his drawn sword, as if to slay her: she evades the blow, falls at his feet, and after inquiring who and what he is, concludes he can be no other than the wise Ulysses. She then solicits him to accept her favors and to indulge in all the luxuries of her mansion; but Ulysses, now master of her and of himself, refuses to listen to her till she has bound her divinity by an oath to do him no harm for the future, and also to restore his companions to their natural shapes. She swears and restores them, and they appear younger and fresher than before; and they and Ulysses remain in peace and safety for a year in the now harmless society of the awful Goddess. The moral meaning of this beautiful tale needs not to be pointed out in particular; every part illustrates the use and the abuse of wordly Pleasure.* One delightfully na-

* *Od.* *κ'*. x. 414. Milton, the idea of whose *Comus* differs from that of the Fable of Circe in exhibiting the spiritual and intellectual, rather than the mere moral or prudential, nature in danger from, and finally triumphing over, the charms of worldly Pleasure, seizes

tural passage may with propriety be quoted; it is where Ulysses appears again to those whom he had left in his ship, after they had supposed him dead or lost.

the thought of the Moly, and gives it a religious or Christian turn, which of course is not found in the Odyssey.

Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out;
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil;
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave, &c.

Gravina, whose beautiful work on Poetry and Poets deserves universal attention, represents the moral of this tale in the following words:—Nella persona di Circe fe palese la natura del piacere, al quale chi corre senza la scorta della sagacità e della ragione, cangia costumi e mente, e si rende simile a' bruti; onde i compagni d' Ulisse, che mal si seppero reggere in quella felicità, divennero bestie; all' incontro chi è guidato dalla ragione, trae dal piacere il puro e ne scuote il velenoso al pari di Ulisse, il quale coll' erba *Moly* datagli da Mercurio, cioè con la sagacità, si godè Circe; ma com' ella volle adoperare in lui la fraude, egli s' armò della ragione, con la quale potè soggiogarla.—§ 16.

The story of the Sirens* also is a beautiful embodying of the same moral truth, that no man can listen without destruction to the enchanting voice of worldly Pleasure, unless he in some measure binds himself hand and foot by the strong fetters of Duty and Self-Control; even then the best safety consists in physical inability to comply and a rapid removal from the scene of temptation.

* *Sir* (Phcen.) to sing; *Siren*—tuneful.—*Bochart*, Chan. I.

Scylla is from *Scol*—destruction; *Charybdis* from *Chor-obdan*—the chasm of ruin or destruction.—*Bochart*, ib.

— ὥς ἐμὲ κεῖνοι, ἐπεὶ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
δακρυόεντες ἔχυντο· δόκησε δ' ἄρα σφίσι θυμὸς
ὥς ἔμεν, ὥς εἰ πατρίδ' ἰκοίαιτο καὶ πόλιν αὐτῶν
τρηχεΐης Ἰθάκης, ἵνα τ' ἐτράφεν, ἧδ' ἐγένοντο.
καὶ μ' ὀλοφυρόμενοι ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδων·

Σοὶ μὲν νοστήσαντι, διοτρεφεὺς, ὧς ἐχάρημεν,
ὥς εἴτ' εἰς Ἰθάκην ἀφικοίμεθα πατρίδα γαῖαν.

So they, at sight of me, dissolv'd in tears
Of rapt'rous joy, and each his spirit felt
With like affections warm'd, as he had reach'd
Just then his country, and his city seen,
Fair Ithaca, where he was born and rear'd;
Then in wing'd accents tender thus they spoke.

Noble Ulysses! thy appearance fills
Our souls with transports, such as we should feel
Arriv'd in safety on our native shore. *Cowper.*

In frequency, length and picturesqueness of *Similes*.
Similes the *Odyssey* is certainly very far behind
the *Iliad*; instead of two hundred and more of
them, there are less than fifty, and these, with a
few exceptions, are short, and imitated from those
of the elder poem. The most spirited of these
exceptions is perhaps the following, where, after
the slaughter of the suitors, *Telemachus* leads
Euryclea to the hall where *Ulysses* is.

Εὖρεν ἔπειτ' Ὀδυσῆα μετὰ κταμένοις νεκύεσσιν
αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον· ὥστε λέοντα,
ὅς ρά τε βεβρωκῶς βοὸς ἔρχεται ἀγραύλοιο,
πάν δ' ἄρα οἱ στήθος τε, παρήϊά τ' ἀμφοτέρωθεν

αἱματόεστα πέλει· δεινὸς δ' εἰς ὧπα ἰδέσθαι·
ὥς Ὀδυσσεὺς πεπάλακτο πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὑπερθεῖν.*

— She found
Ere long Ulysses amid all the slain,
With blood defiled and dust: dread he appeared
As from the pastured ox newly-devoured
The lion stalking back; his ample chest
With gory drops and his broad cheeks are hung:—
Tremendous spectacle!—such seem'd the Chief
Blood-stain'd all over. *Cowper.*

This is undoubtedly a very fine image; but there are few such in the *Odyssey*, and an inferiority in this respect to the *Iliad* must be acknowledged, nor can we completely account for it on the score of the difference of subject-matter and style. There is much more of the Fancy than of the Imagination in the *Odyssey*; yet there is one singularly awful effort of the latter power, which may perhaps without impropriety be quoted here. It is a very grand instance, where we should least expect to find it, of what has been called in Scotland, Second-sight. The Suitors are revelling in great insolence on the eve of their destruction:—

μνηστῆρσι δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
ἄσβεστον γέλον ὥρσε, παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα.
οἱ δ' ἤδη γναθμοῖσι γελῶν ἄλλοτρίοισιν·
αἰμοφόρυκτα δὲ δὴ κρέα ἤσθιον· ὅσσε δ' ἄρα σφέων

* *Od.* x. xxii. 401-6. The likening of ships to sea-horses—*ἄλος ἵπποι*—is an expression worth notice. *Od.* Δ'. iv. 708.

δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο· γόον δ' ὥτετο θυμός·
τοῖσι δὲ δὴ μετέειπε Θεοκλύμενος θεοειδής·

Ἄ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; νυκτὶ μὲν ὑμέων
εἰλύεται κεφαλαί τε, πρόσωπά τε, νέρθε τέ γούνα.
οἰμωγὴ δὲ δέδρε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί·
αἵματι δ' ἐρράδαται τοῖχοι, καλά τε μεσόδμαι.
εἰδώλων δὲ πλέον πρόθυρον, πλείη δὲ καὶ αὐλή,
ιεμένων Ἐρεβόςδε ὑπὸ ζόφον· ἥλιος δὲ
οὐρανοῦ ἐξαπόλωλε, κακὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν ἀχλὺς.

ὥς ἔφαθ'· οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἡδὺν γέλασσαν.*

Then Pallas struck
The suitors with delirium; wide they stretch'd
Their jaws with unspontaneous laughter loud;
Their meat dropp'd blood; tears fill'd their eyes, and
dire

Presages of approaching woe their hearts;
Then thus the prophet Theoclymenus.

Ah! miserable men!—what curse is this
That takes you now? Night wraps itself around
Your faces, bodies, limbs; the palace shakes
With peals of groans; and oh! what floods ye weep!
I see the walls and arches dappled thick
With gore; the vestibule is throng'd; the court
On all sides throng'd with apparitions grim
Of slaughter'd men sinking into the gloom
Of Erebus: the sun is blotted out
From heaven, and midnight whelms you premature.

He said; they, hearing, laughed.— Cowper.

It has been noticed before that a change in the Language.
forms of several words is perceptible in the *Odys-*

* Od. γ'. xx. 345-58.

sey. That change is invariably shown in an abbreviation of syllables or time, as is always the case in the process of refining a language for the purposes of civilized society. The alterations in the Odyssey are not very numerous, but they are sufficiently so to indicate a date for the composition of that poem subsequent to that of the Iliad. Ἀγρότης for ἀγροιάτης, νόνυμος for νώνυμος, θέσπις for θεσπέσιος, are instances, amongst many others, of the tendency towards contraction to which I have adverted. In the Odyssey possessions are more commonly called χρήματα from *using*, whilst in the elder poem they are more commonly termed κτήματα from *gaining*. Λέσχη and βύβλινον ὄπλον are only found in the Odyssey, and Μεσσήνη also, which is not noticed in the catalogue in the Iliad. The strings of the lyre are made of λίνον or flax in the more ancient*—of sheep's gut, ἐϋστρεφές ἄντερον οἶδς, in the more modern poem.† An accurate comparison of any two or three books of both works will enable the student to add largely to the few instances given here of changes in the forms of old, and use of new, words in the Odyssey, and it is well worthy of notice, as I have before remarked, with reference to the age of this poem, that in every instance the usage of the Odyssey became the usage of succeeding times. However, in the placing of an indicative mood

* Il. x'. xviii. 570.

† Od. φ'. xxi. 408

after *ἐπὶν* and other adverbs, in cases where according to regular grammar the subjunctive is always used, both poems agree. This is a point to which attention should be directed.

Of the Versification of the *Odyssey* I need say little here; it is essentially the same as that of the *Iliad*, though perhaps less dactylic, and consequently less rapid and continuous in its course. In variety, sweetness and harmony it is almost equally delightful and equally inimitable. Versification.

In concluding this Introduction, I cannot refrain from expressing my hearty regret that this admirable poem is not more generally read in schools and universities. That it is in fact very little read, is well known to all those who have gone through the usual course of a public education. Undoubtedly the *Odyssey* is not so high an effort of the Imagination as the *Iliad*, yet it is as pregnant with moral and prudential wisdom, as full of life and variety, and much more romantic. The *Iliad* excites the most admiration, the *Odyssey* the most interest. All the latter half of this poem is unequalled as a mere story, and it contains situations and incidents than which no poet or painter ever represented or even conceived any thing more grand and spirit-stirring. "When you are reciting the passage where Ulysses leaps upon the threshold," says Plato, "and discards his rags and shows himself to the asto- Conclusion.

nished suitors, and pours out his arrows on the ground before his feet—are you then in your senses or beside yourself?”* What a picture this moment would make in the hands of a really great artist! So of the passage just preceding this, where Ulysses, a majestic beggar in his own house, takes up and handles and strings the mighty bow as one would string a lyre, and twangs it to his ear, and it sings like a swallow, whilst the Suitors change color, and Jupiter thunders dreadfully, and shows signs of something coming, and the patient hero rejoices.† The following lines are in a different strain, but equally graphic and vigorous. They describe the shipwreck of Ulysses after he has left the island of Calypso.

Ὡς εἰπὼν, σύναγεν νεφέλας, ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον,
 χερσὶ τρίαιναι ἐλών· πάσας δ' ὀρόθυνεν ἅελλας
 παντοίων ἀνέμων· σὺν δὴ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε
 γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον· ὀρώρει δ' οὐρανόθεν νύξ.
 σὺν δ' Εὐρώς τε Νότος τ' ἔπεσε, Ζέφυρός τε δυσαῆς,
 καὶ Βορέης αἰθρηγενέτης, μέγα κῦμα κυλίνδων.
 καὶ τότε Ὀδυσσεύς λυτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ
 ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·

ὦ μοι ἐγὼ δειλὸς, τί νύ μοι μήκιστα γένηται;
 δεῖδω, μὴ δὴ πάντα θεὰ νημερτέα εἶπεν,
 ἥ μ' ἔφατ' ἐν πόντῳ, πρὶν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἰκέσθαι,
 ἄλγε' ἀναπλήσειν· τάδε δὴ νῦν πάντα τελείται.
 οἷοισιν νεφέεσσι περιστέφει οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν
 Ζεὺς, ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον, ἐπισπέρχουσι δ' ἅελλαι

* Ion.

† Φ'. xxi. 404-15.

παντοίων ἀνέμων· νῦν μοι σῶς αἰπὺς ὀλεθρος·
 τρὶς μάκαρες Δαναοί, καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότε ὄλοντο
 Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, χάριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι φέροντες.
 ὥς δὴ ἔγωγ' ὄφελον θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν
 ἡματι τῷ, ὅτε μοι πλεῖστοι χαλκῆρεα δοῦρα
 Τρῶες ἐπέρριψαν περὶ Πηλείωνι θανόντι.
 τῷ κ' ἔλαχον κτερέων, καὶ μευ κλέος ἦγον Ἀχαιοί·
 νῦν δέ με λευγαλέῳ θανάτῳ εἴμαρτο αλῶναι·

ὥς ἄρα μιν εἰπόντ' ἔλασεν μέγα κύμα κατ' ἄκρης,
 δεινὸν ἐπεσσύμενον, περὶ δὲ σχεδίῃν ἐλέλιξεν.
 τῇλε δ' ἀπὸ σχεδῆς αὐτὸς πέσε, πηδάλιον δὲ
 ἐκ χειρῶν προέηκε· μέσον δὲ οἱ ἰστὸν ἔαξε
 δεινὴ μισγομένων ἀνέμων ἐλθοῦσα θύελλα.
 τηλοῦ δὲ σπεῖρον καὶ ἐπὶ κριον ἔμπεσε πόντῳ,
 τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑπόβρυχα θῆκε πολὺν χρόνον· οὐδὲ δυνάσθη
 αἶψα μάλ' ἀνσχεθέειν μεγάλου ὑπὸ κύματος ὀρμῆς·
 εἵματα γάρ ῥ' ἐβάρυνε, τά οἱ πόρε διὰ Καλυψώ·
 ὅψε δὲ δὴ ῥ' ἀνέδν, στόματος δ' ἐξέπτυσεν ἄλμην
 πικρὴν, ἥ οἱ πολλὴ ἀπὸ κρατὸς κελάρυζεν.
 ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς σχεδῆς ἐπελήθετο, τειρόμενός περ,
 ἀλλὰ μεθορμηθεὶς ἐν κύμασιν, ἐλλάβετ' αὐτῆς·
 ἐν μέσῃ δὲ κάθιζε, τέλος θανάτου ἀλεείνων.
 τὴν δ' ἐφορεῖ μέγα κύμα κατὰ ῥόον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.
 ὥς δ' ὅτ' ὕπωρινός Βορέης φορέῃσιν ἀκάνθας
 ἀμπεδίον, πυκινὰ δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλησιν ἔχονται·
 ὥς τὴν ἀμπέλαγος ἀνεμοὶ φέρον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.
 ἄλλοτε μὲν τε Νότος Βορρὴ προβάλεσκε φέρεσθαι,
 ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτ' Εὐρὸς Ζεφύρῳ εἴλασκε διώκειν.*

So saying, he grasp'd his trident, gather'd dense
 The clouds and troubled ocean; ev'ry storm
 From ev'ry point he summon'd, Earth and Sea

Darkening, and the Night fell black from Heaven.
The East, the South, the heavy-blowing West,
And the cold North Wind clear, assail'd at once
His raft, and heav'd on high the billowy flood.
All hope, all courage in that moment lost,
The Hero thus within himself complain'd.

“ Wretch that I am, what destiny at last
Attends me ! much I fear the Goddess' words
All true, which threaten'd me with num'rous ills
On the wide sea, ere I should reach my home.
Behold them all fulfill'd ! with what a storm
Jove hangs the heav'ns, and agitates the Deep !
The winds combin'd beat on me. Now I sink !
Thrice blest, and more than thrice, Achaia's sons
At Ilium slain for the Atridæ' sake !
Ah ! would to Heaven that, dying, I had felt
That day the stroke of Fate, when me the dead
Achilles guarding, with a thousand spears
Troy's furious host assail'd ! Funereal rites
I then had shar'd, and praise from ev'ry Greek,
Whom now the most inglorious death awaits.”

While thus he spake, a billow, on his head
Bursting impetuous, whirl'd the raft around,
And, dashing from his grasp the helm, himself
Plung'd far remote. Then came a sudden gust
Of mingling winds, that in the middle snapp'd
His mast, and, hurried o'er the waves afar,
Both sail and sail-yard fell into the flood.
Long time submerg'd he lay, nor could with ease
The violence of that dread shock surmount,
Or rise to air again, so burthensome
His drench'd apparel prov'd ; but, at the last,
He rose, and, rising, sputter'd from his lips

The brine that trickled copious from his brows.
Nor, harass'd as he was, resign'd he yet
His raft, but, buffeting the waves aside
With desp'rate efforts, seiz'd it, and again,
Fast seated on the middle deck, escap'd.
Then roll'd the raft at random in the flood,
Wallowing unwieldy, toss'd from wave to wave.
As when, in Autumn, Boreas o'er the plain
Conglomerated thorns before him drives,
They, tangled, to each other close adhere,—
So her the winds drove wild about the Deep.
By turns the South consign'd her to be sport
For the rude North Wind, and by turns the East
Yielded her to the worrying West a prey.—*Comper.*

When we read these passages—indeed whilst we are reading almost any part of the poem, we are at a loss to discover evidence of that declining age and enfeebled imagination, which, from certain assumptions of ancient critics, it has become a habit with us to impute to the author of the *Odyssey*. I rather believe that languor or senility, or any thing approaching to it, would be amongst the last defects which a person without any such prejudice on his mind, would think of laying to the charge of this poet, whose fertility of invention—whose range of knowledge—and whose artifice of plot and conduct, denote as much vigor as maturity of intellect; and whose poem in former times was, and in the present would be, if it were more commonly studied, the

most thoroughly popular work of the kind in the world.

There are indeed some few passages in the *Odyssey* which are very displeasing, and can hardly be defended on a plea of poetical justice or dramatic fidelity. I mean particularly the treatment of Melanthius* and the female servants,† than which nothing can be conceived more bloody, brutal or disgusting. This always seems to me to be a complete blot in the otherwise grand and interesting picture of the righteous triumph of Ulysses. It is, in the true sense of the word, *indecorous*. As to all that follows the 296th line of the 23d book being rejected as spurious, on the ground of an inconsistency between the narrative and the predictions of Tiresias in the *Necyomanteia*, I own I have never been able to discover any such alleged contradiction; and though it cannot be denied that the battle in the last book is weak, huddled and unnatural, it may well be said, on the other hand, that the description of the house and the garden of Laertes, and the scene of the mutual recognition of Ulysses and his aged father, are amongst the most beautiful and interesting parts of the whole poem.

Taken together, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are assuredly two of the grandest works of the human

* x'. xxii. 474-7.

† x'. xxii. 457—72.

Intellect. They may be looked upon as the embodied Spirit of Heroic Poetry in the abstract rather than as the Poems of any particular Poet. In them we can discover no peculiarities of thinking or feeling, no system, no caprice. All is wide, diffused, universal, like the primal Light before it was gathered up, and parcelled off into greater and lesser luminaries to rule the day and the night. Look at the difference, in this respect, between the Homeric and all the Greek poetry of the following ages! It is no longer the Muse speaking; but a Theban, or an Athenian or a Sicilian poet. The Individual appears; the temperament of the Man is visible. Poems become unlike each other. The free and liberal spirit of the old heroic Muse is every day straitened, circumscribed, and, if I may use such an expression, packed up and labelled. This observation may be illustrated by reference to the poetry of modern nations. There are thousands of old Spanish Romances on the Cid and the heroes of Roncesvalles, undoubtedly the productions of various authors, which yet might be arranged in order, and set out as several heroic poems, with as little discrepancy between them in style and tone of feeling as can be perceived in the Rhapsodies of the Iliad. The same may be said, with even more obvious truth, of the ancient English Ballads on Robin Hood and his famous band. We

know that these little poems are from different hands; yet I defy any critic to class them under different heads distinguishable by any difference of thought or feeling. As the nation grows older, and the rights of citizens and the habits of civil society become more precisely defined, the Poet's compositions are more or less stamped with the mark of his own character; his spirit, in ceasing to be universal, waxes more intense and personal. A man who had not read a line of the works of Milton or Waller, could not fail to perceive distinct authorship in any two pieces that could be selected from their poetry. So it is with the Greek Poets after the Homeric age.

Yet, no doubt, there are many hearts and minds to which one of these matchless poems will be more delightful than the other; there are many to which both will give equal pleasure, though of different kinds; but there can hardly be a person, not utterly averse from the Muses, who will be quite insensible to the manifold charms of one or the other. The dramatic Action of the Iliad may command attention where the diffused Narrative of the Odyssey would fail to do so; but how can any one, who loves Poetry under any shape, help yielding up his soul to the virtuous Siren-singing of Genius and Truth, which is for ever resounding from the pages of either of these marvellous and truly immortal Poems? In

the Iliad will be found the sterner lessons of public justice or public expedience, and the examples are for statesmen and generals; in the Odyssey we are taught the maxims of private prudence and individual virtue, and the instances are applicable to all mankind; in both, Honesty, Veracity and Fortitude are commended, and set up for imitation; in both Treachery, Falsehood and Cowardice are condemned, and exposed for our scorn and avoidance. Born, like the river of Egypt, in secret light, they yet roll on their great collateral streams, wherein a thousand Poets have bathed their sacred heads, and thence drunk Beauty and Truth, and all sweet and noble harmonies. Known to no man is the time or place of their gushing forth from the Earth's bosom, but their course has been amongst the fields and by the dwellings of men, and our children now sport on their banks and quaff their salutary waters. Of all the Greek Poetry, I, for one, have no hesitation in saying that the Iliad and the Odyssey are the most delightful and have been the most instructive works to me; there is a freshness about them both which never fades, a truth and sweetness which charmed me as a boy and a youth, and on which, if I attain to it, I count largely for a soothing recreation in my old age.

MARGITES.

THIS Poem, which was a Satire upon some strenuous blockhead, as the name implies, does not now exist; but it was so famous in former times that it seems proper to select it for a slight notice from amongst the score of lost works equally attributed to the hand of Homer. It is said by Harpocration* that Callimachus admired the Margites, and Dio Chrysostom says† that Zeno the philosopher wrote a commentary on it. A genuine verse, taken from this poem, is well known:—

Πόλλ' ἠπίστατο ἔργα, κακῶς δ' ἠπίστατο πάντα.‡

For much he knew, but every thing knew ill.

Two other lines, in the same strain, are preserved by Aristotle:—

Τόνδ' οὐτ' αὖ σκαπτῆρα θεοὶ θέσαν, οὐτ' ἀροτῆρα,
οὐτ' ἄλλως τι σοφόν· πάσης δ' ἡμάρτανε τέχνης.§

Him or to dig or plough the Gods denied,
A perfect blockhead in whate'er he tried.

* In voce *Μαργίτης*.

† Diss. 53.

‡ Plato, Alcib. 2. The Atticism of the augment, however, is attributable to Plato, as is well remarked by Mr. G. Penn.—Prim. Arg. § Eth. vi. 7.

One other line, less peculiar, is found in the Scholiast to the *Birds* of Aristophanes:—

Μουσάων θεράπων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος.*

Far-shooting Phœbus' and the Muses' slave.

By others however the *Margites* was attributed to Pigres, and Mr. R. P. Knight is of opinion,† from the use of the augment in the few lines still preserved, that it was the work of an Athenian earlier than the time of Xerxes, but long after the lowest date of the composition of the *Iliad*.

• As it seems to me, it is certainly unphilosophical to suppose a pure satire to have been produced in the dawn of heroic poetry; for, contrary to all other kinds of poems, the satire is essentially the offspring of civilized manners and a complicated and artificial state of society.

* Av. 914. Μουσάων θεράπων
ὁτρηρὸς, κατὰ τὸν Ὅμηρον.

† Proleg. in Hom.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

BATRACHOMYOMACHIA.

Age and
Author.

THE Battle of the Frogs and Mice is a short, mock-heroic poem of ancient date. The text varies in different editions, and is obviously disturbed and corrupt to a great degree. It is commonly said to have been a juvenile essay of Homer's genius; but others have attributed it to the same Pigres, whom I have mentioned before, and whose reputation for humor seems to have invited the appropriation of any wandering piece of ancient wit, the author of which was uncertain. So little did the Greeks, before the era of the Ptolemies, know or care about that department of Criticism which is employed in determining the genuineness of ancient writings! As to this little poem being a youthful prolusion of Homer, it seems sufficient to say that from the beginning to the end it is a plain and palpable parody, not only of the general spirit, but of numerous passages, of the Iliad itself; and even if no such

intention to parody were discoverable in it, the objection would still remain that to suppose a work of the mere burlesque to be the primary effort of poetry in a simple age, seems to reverse that order in the development of national taste, which the history of every other people in Europe and of many in Asia has almost ascertained to be a law of the human mind. It is in a state of society much more refined and permanent than that described in the Iliad, that any popularity would attend such a ridicule of War and the Gods as is contained in this poem; and the fact of there having existed three other poems* of the same kind, attributed, for aught we can see, with as much reason to Homer, is a strong inducement to believe that none of them were in reality of the Homeric age. Mr. R. P. Knight† infers, from the usage of the word δέλτος‡ as a writing tablet instead of διφθέρα or a skin, which, according to Herodotus,§ was the material employed by the Asiatic Greeks for that purpose, that this poem was another offspring of Attic ingenuity; and, generally, that the familiar mention of the cock|| is a strong argument against so ancient a date for its composition.

* These were the Arachnomachia, Geranomachia, and Psaromachia; the Wars of the Spiders, the Cranes, and the Starlings.

† Proleg. ad Hom.

‡ V. 3.

§ Terpsich. 58.

|| V. 191.

Character
and Plan.

As to the merits of the *Batrachomyomachia*, although we may have some difficulty in sympathizing fully in the ingenuous declaration of *Jacobus Gaddius**—that he thought it a more noble and perfect poem than either the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, yet we may well allow that it is a bold, easy and witty mock-heroic composition, and not surpassed or even rivalled by many of those which have in subsequent ages followed in its train. The story is very short. A mouse, *Psycharpax* (Crumb-snatcher), exhausted with flying from a weasel, comes to a pool to drink; a wanton frog, *Physignathus* (Puffcheek), having apparently never seen such a wild-fowl before, enters into conversation with him, the result of which is that Mouse mounts upon Frog's back and goes to sea. It should seem that Frog meant to be honest, but, a water-snake lifting up his head at no great distance, he is so frightened that, forgetful of his poor landsman, down he dives to the bottom. Crumb-snatcher struggles, sputters, makes a speech denouncing his perfidious betrayer to the vengeance of every feeling mouse, and then sinks amongst the bulrushes. The deceased was son

* "Paradoxon dicere volo, licet verear nasutos Censores vel Momos; *Batrachomyomachia* mihi videtur nobilior propiorque perfectioni quam *Odyssea* et *Ilias*, imo utramque superat judicio ac ingenio et præstantia texturæ, cum sit poema ludicrum excellens."

T. 1. de script. non ecclesiast. p. 208. Fabric. lib. ii. c. 2. s. 1.

and heir of the King of the Mice, (a weasel and a gin had bereaved him of two brothers,) and his father by his influence induces every Mouse in the field to take arms and avenge him of the injurious Frog. The Frogs perceive the bustle, and, arming themselves, are fools enough to leave their more proper element, and meet their assailants on dry land. Meantime Jupiter holds a council on the subject, but at the suggestion of Minerva—who, though extremely angry with the Mice for nibbling one of her petticoats into rags, is still so incensed with the Frogs for depriving her of sleep, that she will assist neither party—it is resolved that the Gods shall be passive spectators of the contest. The battle begins; great prowess is displayed on either side; but at length the Mice get the better, and the entire race of Frogs is on the very point of extermination, when Jupiter interferes with lightning and thunder. The Mice however pay no attention to these hints of the divine will, and are pursuing their advantage, when Jupiter, as a last resource, orders a detachment of Crabs to make an *échelon* movement upon the victors. This manœuvre effectually checks the Mice, who, some with their tails, and some with their legs, bitten off, retire to their holes, and leave the remnant of the Frogs to croak dolefully over their defeat and loss.

The description of the armour of the comba- Armour.

tants will put the student in mind of Shakspeare's Queen Mab.* The Mice arm as follows:—

Κνημῖδας μὲν πρῶτα περὶ κνήμησιν ἔθηκαν,
 ῥήξαντες κυάμους χλωρούς, εὐτ' ἀσκήσαντες,
 οὓς αὐτοὶ διὰ νυκτὸς ἐπιστάντες κατέτρωξαν.
 θώρηκας δ' εἶχον καλαμοστεφένων ἀπὸ βυσσῶν,
 οὓς γαλέην δείραντες ἐπισταμένως ἐποίησαν.
 ἀσπίς δ' ἦν λύχνου τὸ μεσόμφαλον' ἡ δέ νυ λόγχη
 εὐμήκης βελόνη, παγχάλκεον ἔργον Ἀρηος.
 ἡ δὲ κόρυς τὸ λέπυρον ἐπὶ κροτάφοις καρύοιο.†

Splitting first the pods
 Of beans, which they had sever'd from the stalk
 With hasty tooth by night, they made them greaves;
 Their corslets were of platted straw, well lin'd
 With spoils of an excoriated cat;
 The lamp contributed its central tin
 A shield for each; the glittering needle long
 Arm'd every gripe with a terrific spear;
 And auburn shells of nuts their brows inclos'd.

Cowper.

The Frogs are equally ingenious, and indeed seem much better provided both for offence and defence:—

Φύλλοις μὲν μαλαχῶν κνήμας ἕας ἀμφεκάλυψαν·
 θώρηκας δ' εἶχον χλοερῶν πλατέων ἀπὸ τεύτλων·
 φύλλα δὲ τῶν κραμβῶν εἰς ἀσπίδας εὖ ἤσκησαν·
 ἔγχος δ' ὀξύσχοινος ἐκάστω μακρὸς ἀρήρει·
 καὶ κόρυθες κοχλιῶν λεπτῶν κράατ' ἀμφεκάλυπτον.‡

With leaves of mallows each his legs incas'd,
 Guarded his bosom with a corslet cut

* Romeo and Juliet, Act. I. sc. iv.

† V. 123—130.

‡ V. 160—164.

From the green beet, with foliage stout of kail
Fashion'd his ample buckler, with a rush
Keen-tipt, of length tremendous, fill'd his gripe,
And on his brows set fast a cockle shell.—*Comper.*

The Crabs are well described :—

Ἦλθον δ' ἐξαίφνης νωτάκμονες, ἀγκυλοχῆλαι,
λοξοβάται, στρεβλοὶ, ψαλιδόστομοι, ὀστρακόδερμοι,
ὀστοφνεῖς, πλατύνωτοι, ἀποστλιβροντες ἐν ὤμοις,
βλαιοσοὶ, χειροτένοντες, ἀπὸ στέρνων ἐσορῶντες,
ὀκτάποδες, δικάρηνοι, ἀχειρέες· οἱ δὲ καλεῦνται
Καρκῖνοι.

———— Sudden they came. Broad-back'd
They were, and smooth like anvils, sickle-claw'd,
Sideling in gait, their mouths with pincers arm'd,
Shell-clad, crook-kneed, protruding far before
Long hands and claws, with eye-holes in the breast
Legs in quaternion rang'd on either side,—
And Crabs their name. *Comper.*

But the speech of Minerva in the council of the
Gods is the acme of the poet's boldness and bur-
lesque; and it really seems to me to be so com-
pletely Aristophanic in its spirit and expressions,
as to make it almost absurd to suppose it a pro-
duction of the same age with the *Iliad*. “O Fa-
ther,” said the Goddess, “never will I assist the
Mice, be they never so distressed; for they have
done me infinite harm, nibbling my wreaths and
dirtying my lamps to get at the oil. But I am
more particularly annoyed at what they have
lately done: they have actually gnawed all round

Speech of
Minerva.

a gown which I had worked myself (one of the finest stuffs to be found any where), and have made holes in it. Now the fact is, the man of whom I got the stuff presses me and demands payment; and I am excessively vexed about its being spoilt, because I have put all this work into what I may be said to have borrowed only, and I am unable to return it or its price.* Nevertheless I will not stir for the Frogs either; for they are utterly without discretion. The other day as I was returning from battle, excessively fatigued and wishing to sleep, they made such an outrageous noise that I could not sleep a wink; and so I lay awake with a headache till the cock crew," &c. This, it must be allowed, is pretty free language, and savors strongly of an age in which sceptical speculations had given birth to, and excited a taste for, a good deal of licentious raillery on the characters and habits of the popular divinities. It is precisely of a piece with what is to be found in every play of Aristophanes, and indeed in the mention of the Frogs and their names anticipates many of the reiterated jokes of his audacious Muse. The oftener I read this very pretty little poem (and no one can read it without pleasure), the more I seem

* I do not pretend to understand this passage exactly; there is evidently some confusion in the text. If *πράσσει με τόνους*, *exactis usury of me*, is genuine, the claim of Homeric parentage must surely be given up.

to feel and detect its comparative modernism and truly Athenian parentage; but Homer has so long and so popularly had the credit, such as it may be, of being the author of the *Batrachomyomachia*, that it would appear pedantic in this day to notice it for the purpose of criticism in any company less select than that of the Homeric Poems.*

* Philip Melancthon wrote a commentary on the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, and conceived the scope of the poet to have been to excite a hatred of tumults and seditions in the minds of the readers.

Pierre la Seine thought the object was to recommend to young men temperance in eating and drinking;—*Why*, I do not find written.

Fabric. Lib. ii. c. 2. s. 3.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE HYMNS.

Homeric
Hymns.

THE Homeric Hymns, including the Hymn to Ceres and the fragment to Bacchus which were discovered in the last century at Moscow, and edited by Ruhnken, amount to thirty-three; but, with the exception of those to Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Ceres, they are so short as not to consist of more than about three hundred and fifty lines in all. After what I have already stated of the controversies touching the origin and genuineness of the Iliad, and of the probability that the Odyssey itself was the production of an age subsequent to that of the Iliad, it is scarcely necessary to say here that the inclination of almost all modern critics, with the eminent exception of Hermann, is to deny that any of these Hymns belong to Homer. Nevertheless it is certain that they are of high antiquity, and were commonly attributed by the ancients to Homer with almost as much confidence as the Iliad and Odyssey. Thucy-

dides* quotes a passage from the Hymn to Apollo, and alleges the authority of Homer, whom he expressly takes to be the writer, to prove an historical remark; and Diodorus Siculus,† Pausanias‡ and many other ancient authors cite different verses from these Hymns, and always treat them as genuine Homeric remains. On the other hand, in the Life under the name of Plutarch nothing is allowed to be genuine but the Iliad and the Odyssey; Athenæus§ suspects one of the Homeridæ or Homeric Rhapsodists to be author of the Hymn to Apollo; and the Scholiast to Pindar|| testifies that one Cynæthus, a Chian Rhapsodist, who flourished in great reputation at Syracuse about 500 B. C., was supposed by many to be the real Homer of this particular poem. One thing, however, is certain, that these Hymns are extremely ancient, and it is probable that some of them only

* Δηλοῖ δὲ μάλιστα Ὅμηρος ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἦν, ἐν τοῖς ἔπαισι τοῖσδε, ἃ ἔστιν ἐκ προοίμιου Ἀπόλλωνος

Ἀλλὰ σὺ Δῆλῳ, Φοῖβε—κ. τ. λ. v. 146-50, 165-72.

Thucyd. lib. iii. c. 104.

The Scholiast remarks that προοίμιον is synonymous with ὕμνος from οἶμῃ cantus.

† III. 66. IV. 2. IX.

‡ II. IV.

§ Καὶ Ὅμηρος δὲ ἃ τῶν Ὀμηριδῶν τις ἐν τοῖς εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα ὕμνοις φησὶν

Φέρμην γ' ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων—κ. τ. λ. v. 515-6.

Ath. I. 19.

|| Ἦν δὲ ὁ Κίταιθος Χῖος ὃς καὶ τῶν ἐπιγραφομένων Ὀμήρου ποιημάτων τὸν εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα γεγραμμένον ὕμνον λέγεται πεποιηκέναι.

Nem. II.

yield to the Iliad and the Odyssey in remoteness of date. They vary in character and in poetical merit; but there is scarcely one amongst them that has not something to interest us, and they have all of them, in greater or less degrees, that simple Homeric liveliness which never fails to charm us wherever we meet with it.

Hymn to
Apollo.

I. The first and longest and most celebrated, though perhaps not the most deservedly so, is the Hymn to Apollo. The lines, quoted by Thucydides, in which Homer is supposed to speak directly of himself, his blindness and his residence in the island of Chios, have, I believe, been the chief cause of this Hymn being so much better known than any of the others. They are indeed beautiful verses, and if none worse had ever been attributed to Homer, the Prince of Poets would have had little reason to complain. He has been describing the Delian Festival in honor of Apollo and Diana, and concludes this part of the poem with an address to the women of that island, to whom it is to be supposed that he had become familiarly known by his frequent recitations.

Χαίρετε δ' ὑμεῖς πᾶσαι· ἐμεῖο δὲ καὶ μετόπισθε
μνήσασθ', ὅππότε κέν τις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων
ἐνθάδ' ἀνείρηται ξείνος ταλαπείριος ἑλθὼν·
ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὕμνιν ἀνὴρ ἤδιστος αἰοῶν
ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καὶ τέφ' τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;
ὑμεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθε ἅψ' ἡμέων·

τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἰκεῖ δὲ Χίῳ ἐνὶ παιπαλοέσση,
τοῦ πᾶσαι μετόπισθεν ἀριστεύουσιν ἁοιδαί.*

Virgins! farewell—and oh! remember me
Hereafter, when some stranger from the sea

A hapless wanderer may your isle explore,
And ask you, Maids, of all the bards you boast,
Who sings the sweetest and delights you most—

Oh! answer all—“A blind old man and poor—
Sweetest he sings—and dwells on Chios’ rocky
shore!”

The Hymn to Apollo, however, is less complete as a whole than those to Mercury or Venus, and there is a disjointedness and want of unity discoverable in some parts, which might lead us to suspect that it is in fact a compilation of two or three separate poems. In particular, from the 179th line there seems to commence a distinct hymn in a strain materially different from that which precedes it. Not indeed that the pure Greek Hymn, a very peculiar species of composition, is always founded on a regular plan, embracing all the attributes or all the adventures of the deity to whom it is addressed; the Hymnist, more commonly, fixes upon one or two characteristic exploits, and confines himself to a detailed narrative of them only. Hence it was no more than natural that numerous hymns should be addressed to the same God or Goddess by several

* V. 165-73.

poets, or even by the same individual, in each of which poems, for the most part, some new legend was dwelt upon, and some new view of the character of the divinity taken. Yet even upon this confined plan, the particular subject is scarcely ever pursued uninterruptedly to the end; the narrative form, for which the poet frequently abandons that of invocation, is again as frequently broken by reiterated addresses and enumerations of titles; and thus an appearance of so many *fresh beginnings*, as it were, has been produced, which seems to have had great weight in inducing Wolfe to pronounce all the Homeric Hymns heterogeneous compilations from the Iliad, Odyssey and other and distinct poems now lost. The internal evidence, however, of individual authorship in the Hymns to Mercury and Venus, and in many of the others, is too much for this, and all the latter part of this Hymn to Apollo is as essentially homogeneous and connected as are the verses of any poem ever written.

The first part of the Hymn is taken up with a description of the wanderings of Latona in search of a safe place of delivery, her agreement with the island of Delos to receive her during her labor, the birth of Apollo and his assumption of the Lyre, the Bow and of the Faculty of Prophecy. The imitations of this portion of the poem, in the Hymns of Callimachus to Apollo and

Delos are so close and frequent, that they would scarcely escape the charge of downright plagiarism in a case where modern poets were concerned. I mention this as affording some light, by way of anticipation, towards an accurate estimate of the real merit of Callimachus as a Poet, of which a fitter time will occur hereafter for speaking more at large; but it is certainly surprizing that so much attention should be paid to that writer, and so much of his works read in some schools, where the venerable originals, from which he copied so abundantly and which he has rarely equalled, are scarcely even mentioned, and are never read. It is with the Homeric Hymns as it is with many of the plays and all the minor pieces of Shakspeare; they are darkened by the excessive lustre of the sun-like poetry at their side, and are esteemed the less in proportion to the splendor of their imputed kindred. Surely such poetry as the following, so rich, so lively and natural, deserves something better than the neglect with which it is ordinarily treated in schools and at college! It describes the labor of Latona and the birth of Apollo.

Εἴτ' ἐπὶ Δήλῳ ἔβαινε μογροστόκος Εἰλείθνια,
 τὴν τότε δὴ τόκος εἶλε, μενοίνησεν δὲ τεκέσθαι·
 ἀμφὶ δὲ φοῖνικι βάλε πῆχες, γοῦνα δ' ἔρεισε
 λειμῶνι μαλακῷ· μείδῃσε δὲ γαῖ' ὑπένερθεν,
 ἐκ δ' ἔθορε προφώσδε· θεαὶ δ' ὀλόλυξαν ἅπασα·
 ἔνθα σε, ἦϊε Φοῖβε, θεαὶ λοῦον ὕδατι καλῷ

ἀγνώε καὶ καθαρῶς, σπάρξαν δ' ἐν φάρεϊ λευκῷ,
 λεπτῷ, νηγατέφ'· περὶ δὲ χρύσειον στρόφον ἦκαν.
 οὐδ' ἄρ' Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορα θήσατο μήτηρ,
 ἀλλὰ Θέμις νέκταρ τε καὶ ἄμβροσίνην ἐρατεινήν
 ἀθανάτησιν χερσὶν ἐπήρξατο· χαῖρε δὲ Ληγῷ,
 οὐνεκα τοξοφόρον καὶ καρτερόν υἱὸν ἔτικτεν.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ, Φοῖβε, κατέβρωε ἄμβροτον εἶδαρ,
 οὐ σέ γ' ἔπειτ' ἴσχον χρύσειοι στρόφοι ἀσπαίροντα,
 οὐδέ τι δέσμα τ' ἔρυκε, λύνοντο δὲ πείρατα πάντα,
 αὐτίκα δ' ἀθανάτοισι μετηύδα Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων·
 εἴη μοι κίθαρίς τε φίλη καὶ καμπύλα τόξα,
 χρήσω τ' ἀνθρώποισι Διὸς νημερτέα βουλὴν.*

But when Lucina reach'd the Delian strand,
 Then labor seiz'd her;† yearning for the birth
 She clasp'd the palm tree with her arms, and set
 Her knees on the soft meadow, whiles the Earth
 Smil'd underneath; forth rush'd the God to light,
 And all the Goddesses for wonder cried.
 Then did they bathe thee in a fresh, pure stream,
 Archer Apollo! and enswath'd thy limbs
 In a white robe, translucent, newly wrought,
 With golden belt encinctured; nor thee
 Thy mother fed, thou of the golden sword,
 Apollo!—but with her immortal hands
 Great Themis nectar and ambrosia gave
 Delicious; whilst Latona joy'd to own
 Her archer-son invincible. Meantime,
 After the food celestial, neither zone
 Of gold, nor folding robes could hold
 Thy panting breast, and all thy bands were burst.
 Then didst thou speak to the Immortals round,—
 “Be mine, henceforth, the Lyre and curved Bow,
 And Jove's authentic will to tell to Men!”

* V. 115-32.

† Latona.

The Poet then relates the deceit practised by the nymph Delphusa on Apollo, in order to deter him from founding his oracle at Delphos, his detection of it and the punishment inflicted by him; the single conception by Juno of the monster Typhaon, the destruction of the serpent Pytho, and the building of the famous temple; and all the latter part of the Hymn is occupied with a very curious and very spirited account of the manner in which Apollo lays hold of the crew of a Cretan merchant vessel, drives them to the bay of Crissa, and ultimately converts them all into the priests and ministers of his new Oracle. He had leaped upon the deck of the ship in the shape of a dolphin,* and frightened the sailors almost out of their senses; in vain did they attempt to land on the Pylian coast whither they were bound; the vessel would not obey the helm, but drifted on round the Peloponnesus into the Corinthian Gulf, and finally ran ashore close to the town of Crissa.†

Ἐνθ' ἐκ νηὸς ὄρουσεν ἀναξ ἐκάεργος Ἀπόλλων,
 ἀστέρι εἰδόμενος μέσῳ ἡματι, τοῦ δ' ἀπὸ πολλὰ
 σπινθαρίδες πωτῶντο, σέλας δ' εἰς οὐρανὸν ἦκεν·

* *Δελφῖν ἰουμάς*. This was certainly not the dolphin of modern times, which is a slender, elegant and comparatively small fish; but, as seems clear from the descriptions in the classic poets generally, nothing more or less than the porpoise.

† There is a striking general resemblance between the whole of this scene and the enchantments wrought by Ariel in the king's ship in the Tempest.—Act I. sc. 2.

ἐς δ' ἄντον κατέδυσε διὰ τριπόδων ἐριτίμων.
 ἐν δ' ἄρ' ὅγε φλόγα δαΐε, πιφανσκόμενος τὰ ἅ κῆλα,
 πᾶσαν δὲ Κρίσσην κᾶτεχεν σέλας· αἱ δ' ὀλόλυξαν
 Κρισσαίων ἄλοχοι, καλλίζωνοί τε θύγατρες,
 Φοίβου ὑπὸ ῥιπῆς· μέγα γὰρ δέος εἶλεν ἕκαστον.
 ἔνθεν δ' αὖτ' ἐπὶ νῆα, νόημι' ὥς, ἄλτο πέτεσθαι,
 ἀνέρι εἰδόμενος αἰζηῷ τε κρατερῷ τε.*

Then from the ship rush'd the far-shooting King
 Apollo, as a mid-day meteor, whence
 Sparkles innumerable flash'd, and fill'd
 The heavens with light; right through the tripods he
 Pass'd to his secret fane, and there in flames
 Burn'd visible with terrors manifest.
 All Crissa blaz'd throughout, and Crissan wives
 And beautifully-cinctured maidens shriek'd,
 Under the rushing of the God,—for fear,
 Fear and deep awe had seiz'd on every soul.
 Then, swift as thought, he on the deck again
 Burst with a bound in semblance of a youth.

The Hymn ends with a passage that seems to contain a particle of satire and raillery in it. The Captain of the Cretan vessel asks Apollo with great deference how he proposed to maintain them in his temple, situated as it was on a rock, which did not admit of any manner of culture; to which pertinent inquiry Phœbus coolly answers that they need not trouble their heads upon that subject, but take care to keep a knife in the right hand, and kill and cook the sheep and other cattle which the tribes of men would

* V. 440-9.

be sure to bring. The Poet concludes with a verse which seems to have been the regular termination of the ancient Hymn:—

*Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ σεῖο καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ' αἰοιδῆς.**

II. The Hymn to Mercury is one of the most Hymn to
Mercury. diverting poems in the Greek literature. It is pre-eminently humorous in the best sense of the word, and therefore essentially different from the wit and comic license of Aristophanes. This Hymn is perfectly regular and connected throughout, and tells the whole story of Mercury's famous felony on the oxen of Apollo, the altercation of the two Gods, their reference to Jupiter and final compromise. That it should be honorable to a deity to be celebrated for such thieving and such ineffable lying as Mercury here plays off against the sagacious and truth-loving Apollo, is a very curious characteristic of the popular religion of the Greeks; and indeed the matter is so managed by the poet that most readers get more fond of this little born rogue than of any other of the ancient dwellers on Olympus. In this hymn Hermes is gifted with the character of a perfect

* V. 546. It is to be noticed that throughout this hymn neither Apollo nor Diana are in any way connected in attributes or functions with the Sun or Moon. In the Hymn to the Sun (v. 2-3), he is said to be the son of Euryphaessa and Hyperion. See also the Hymn to the Moon, and Hymn to Mercury, v. 99-100, where the Moon is called the daughter of Pallas.

Spanish Picaro, a sort of Lazarillo de Tormes amongst the Gods, stealing their goods, playing them tricks, and telling such enormous, such immortal, lies to skreen himself from detection, that certainly no human thief could ever have the vanity to think of rivalling them on earth.*

Mercury was the son of Jupiter and Maia, and was born in a cave about day-break: by noon he had made a lyre out of the shell of a tortoise, which he caught crawling at the entrance of the cavern, and had learnt to play upon it; and that same evening he stole and drove away a matter of fifty cows belonging to Apollo and grazing on the Pierian hills. The description of the ancient lyre in this hymn has been followed by almost all writers in mentioning the subject:—

Πῆξε δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέτροισι ταμῶν δόνακας καλάμοιο,
πειρήνας διὰ νῶτα λιθοβρίνιοιο χελώνης.
ἀμφὶ δὲ δέρμα τάνυσσε βοὸς πραπίδεςσιν ἐῆσι,
καὶ πήχεις ἐνέθηκ', ἐπὶ δὲ ζυγὸν ἥραρεν ἀμφοῖν·
ἐπτά δὲ συμφώνους οἴων ἐτανύσσατο χορδὰς.
αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ τεύξε φέρων ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα,
πλῆκτρον ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέρος· ἢ δ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς
σμερδαλέον κονάβησε· θεὸς δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν ᾄειδεν
ἐξ αὐτοσχεδῆς πειρώμενος.†

And through the stone-shell'd tortoise's strong skin
At proper distances small holes he made,

* Sir Joshua Reynolds's admirable picture of "Mercury as a Thief" is a complete embodying of the spirit of this Hymn.

† V. 47-55.

And fastened the cut stems of reeds within,
 And with a piece of leather overlaid
 The open space, and fixed the cubits in,
 Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o'er all
 Symphonious chords of sheep-gut rhythmical.

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,
 He tried the chords, and made division meet
 Preluding with the plectrum, and there went
 Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet
 Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent
 A strain of unpremeditated wit

Joyous and wild and wanton.

Shelley.

As to the cows, he makes them walk backward and does so himself, taking the additional precaution of throwing away his sandals and wrapping up his feet in the leafy twigs of shrubs. He meets one old laboring man, and recommends him to be blind and deaf to present objects, or he may suffer for it. When he comes to the Alpheus, he turns the cows into a meadow to feed, and kills and dresses two of them; and after extinguishing the fire, he creeps about the dawn into his cradle again. The whole description is very graphic and spirited.

Παννόχως· καλὸν δὲ φῶς ἐπέλαμπε Σελήνης·
 κυλλήνης δ' αἶψ' αὖτις ἀφίκετο διὰ κάρηνα
 ὄρθριος, οὐδὲ τις οἱ δολιχῆς ὁδοῦ ἀντεβόλησεν
 οὔτε Θεῶν μακάρων, οὔτε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων·
 οὐδὲ κύνες λελάκοντο· Διὸς δ' ἐριούνιος Ἑρμῆς
 δοχμωθείς μεγάρῳ διὰ κλήϊθρον ἔδυνεν,
 αὐρῇ ὀπωρινῇ ἐναλίγκιος, ἥντ' ὀμίχλη.

ἰθύνας δ' ἄντρον ἐξέκετο πίονα νηδὺν
 ἦκα ποσὶ προβιβῶν· οὐ γὰρ κτύπεν, ὥσπερ ἐπ' οὐδεὶ.
 ἐσσυμένως δ' ἄρα λίκνον ἐπώχετο κύδιμος Ἑρμῆς,
 σπάργανον ἄμφ' ὤμοις εἰλυμένος, ἥντε τέκνον
 νήπιον, ἐν παλάμῃσι παρ' ἰγνύσι λαῖφος ἀθύρων,
 κέϊτο, χέλυν ἐρατὴν ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ χειρὸς ἐέργων.*

All night he worked in the serene moonshine ;—
 But when the light of day was spread abroad,
 He sought his natal mountain-peaks divine.
 On his long wandering, neither man nor god
 Had met him, since he killed Apollo's kine,
 Nor had a house-dog barked upon his road.
 Now he obliquely through the key-hole pass'd,
 Like a thin mist, or an autumnal blast.

Right through the temple of the spacious cave
 He went with soft light feet—as if his tread
 Fell not on earth—no sound their falling gave ;
 Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread
 The swaddling clothes about him, and the knave
 Lay playing with the covering of his bed
 With his right hand about his knees—the left
 Held his beloved lyre.

Shelley.

His mother suspects him of some roguish adventure, and predicts that Apollo will discover him and punish him severely; to all which expostulation he answers that he is determined to provide, by a due exercise of his talents, for the comfortable maintenance of his mother and himself; and as for Apollo, if he should make any disturbance about the cows, Mercury declares he will imme-

* V. 141-53.

diately go and commit a burglary on the Pythian temple, and steal twice the value in tripods and robes and gold, and adds that his mother might come and see him do it if she liked.

Meantime Apollo misses his cattle, and by inquiring of the old laboring man who had seen Mercury, and by help of augury, he discovers that his brother of the half blood is the thief. He flies to Cyllene, though he is something puzzled by the extraordinary foot-marks in the sand at Pylos, and enters the cave. Mercury rolls himself up into a little ball, puts his head under the clothes, and pretends to be asleep. However Apollo, after searching every hole and corner in the cave, and looking into Maia's wardrobe and storeroom, lights upon our little friend and addresses him thus:—

ὦ παῖ, ὃς ἐν λίκνῳ κατὰκειαι, μήνυέ μοι βοῦς
θᾶπτον· ἐπεὶ τάχα νῶϊ διοισόμεθ' οὐ κατὰ κόσμον.
ρίψω γάρ σε βαλὼν ἐς τάρταρον ἡερόεντα,
εἰς ψόφον αἰνόμορον καὶ ἀμήχανον· οὐδέ σε μήτηρ
ἐς φάος, οὐδέ πατήρ ἀναλύσεται, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γαίῃ
ἐβρῆσεις, ὀλίγοισιν ἐν ἀνδράσιν ἡγεμονεύων.*

———— “ Little cradled rogue, declare
Of my illustrious heifers—where they are !
Speak quickly ! or a quarrel straight 'twixt us
Must rise, and the event will be that I
Shall hurl you into dismal Tartarus
In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;—

* V. 254-9.

Nor shall your father, nor your mother loose
 The bars of that black dungeon—utterly
 You shall be cast out from the light of day
 To rule the ghosts of men—unblest as they!"

Shelley.

To which Mercury answers :—

Λητοῖδῃ, τίνα τοῦτον ἀπήνεα μῦθον ἔειπες ;
 καὶ βοῦς ἀγραύλους διζήμενος ἐνθάδ' ἰκάνεις ;
 οὐκ ἴδον, οὐ πυθόμην, οὐκ ἄλλον μῦθον ἄκουσα'
 οὐκ ἂν μηνύσαιμ', οὐκ ἂν μήνυτρον ἀροίμην.
 οὔτε βοῶν ἐλατῆρι, κραταιῷ φωτὶ, ἔοικα.
 οὐκ ἐμὸν ἔργον τοῦτο, πάρος δέ μοι ἄλλα μέμηλεν.
 ὕπνος ἔμοιγε μέμηλε καὶ ἡμετέρης γάλα μητρός,
 σπάργανά τ' ἀμφ' ὤμοισιν ἔχειν καὶ θερμὰ λοετρά.
 μή τις τοῦτο πύθοιτο, πόθεν τόδε νεῖκος ἐτύχθη.
 καὶ κεν δὴ μέγα θαῦμα μετ' ἀθανάτοισι γένοιτο,
 παῖδα νέον γεγαῶτα διὰ προθύροιο περῆσαι
 βουσί μετ' ἀγραύλοισι· τὸ δ' ἀπρεπέως ἀγορεύεις.
 χθὲς γενόμην, ἀπαλοὶ δὲ πόδες, τρηχεῖα δ' ὑπὸ χθών.
 εἰ δὲ θέλεις, πατὴρ κεφαλὴν, μέγαν ὄρκον, ὁμοῦμαι,
 μὴ μὲν ἐγὼ μήτ' αὐτὸς ὑπίσχομαι, αἴτιος εἶναι,
 μήτε τιν' ἄλλον ὅπως βοῶν κτυπὸν ὑμετεράων,
 αἵτινες αἱ βόες εἰσὶ· τὸ δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούω.*

“ Son

Of great Latona, what a speech is this !
 Why come you here to ask me what is done
 With the wild oxen which it seems you miss ?
 I have not seen them, nor from any one
 Have heard a word of the whole business ;
 If you should promise an immense reward,
 I could not tell more than you now have heard.

* V. 261-77.

An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,
 And I am but a little new-born thing,
 Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong ;—
 My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling
 The cradle clothes 'about me all day long,
 Or half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing,
 And to be washed in water clear and warm,
 And hushed and kissed and kept secure from harm.

O ! let not e'er this quarrel be averred !

Th' astounded gods would laugh at you, if e'er
 You should allege a story so absurd,

As that a new-born infant forth could fare
 Out of his house after a savage herd !

I was born yesterday ; my small feet are
 Too tender for the roads so hard and rough ;—
 And if you think that this is not enough,

I swear a great oath, by my Father's head, — *He then swears*
 That I stole not your cows, and that I know *indeed*
 Of no one else who might, or could or did ; *catch in "Ed"*
 Whatever things cows are, I do not know, *de Idées "G"*
 For I have only heard the name." *Shelley. you say to*

This is pretty hard swearing. Apollo however *an oath.*
 is inflexible, and catches the boy in his arms ; the *Now they*
 boy behaves in a sort of way that makes it as dif- *it is not*
 ficult for Apollo to hold him as for me to describe *hard—*
 the adventure ; and the result, after much alter-
 cation, in which Mercury in vain endeavors to
 cozen his brother—

πολύμητις ἔδων πολυμήχανον εὔρεν—*

diamond cutting diamond—they both go to Olympus, and Apollo lays his complaint before Jupiter. Mercury makes the following defence:—

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦτοι ἐγὼ σοι ἀληθείην καταλέξω·
 νημερτής τε γάρ εἰμι, καὶ οὐκ οἶδα ψεύδεσθαι·
 ἦλθεν ἐς ἡμετέρου διζήμενος εἰλίποδας βοῦς
 σήμερον ἡελίοιο νέον ἐπιτελλομένοιο·
 οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων ἄγε μάρτυρας, οὐδὲ κατόπτας.
 μὴνύειν δ' ἐκέλευεν ἀναγκαίης ὑπὸ πολλῆς.
 πολλὰ δὲ μ' ἠπέιλησε βαλεῖν ἐς τάρταρον εὐρὺν,
 οὐνεχ' ὁ μὲν τέρεν ἄνθος ἔχει φιλοκυδέος ἥβης,
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ χθιζὸς γενόμην· τὰ δὲ οἶδε καὶ αὐτός·
 οὔτι βοῶν ἑλατῆρι, κραταιῷ φωτὶ, ἐοικώς.
 πείθεο (καὶ γὰρ ἐμείο πατὴρ φίλος εὐχεται εἶναι)
 ὥς οὐκ οἶκαδ' ἔλασσα βόας, (ὥς ὄλβιος εἶην)
 οὐδ' ὑπὲρ οὐδὸν ἔβην· τόδ' δ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύω·
 Ἥλιον μάλα αἰδέομαι καὶ δαίμονας ἄλλους,
 καὶ σε φίλῳ, καὶ τοῦτον ὀπίζομαι· οἶσθα καὶ αὐτός,
 ὥς οὐκ αἰτιός εἰμι· μέγαν δ' ἐπιδαίομαι ὄρκον·
 οὐ μὰ τὰδ' ἀθανάτων ἐνκόσμητα προθύραια,
 καὶ ποτ' ἐγὼ τούτῳ τίσω ποτὲ νηλεῆ φωνήν,
 καὶ κρατερῷ περ εὖντι· σὺ δ' ὀπλοτέροισιν ἄρηγε.*

“Great Father! you know clearly before hand
 That all which I shall say to you is soothe;
 I am a most veracious person, and
 Totally unacquainted with untruth.
 At sun-rise Phœbus came, but with no band
 Of Gods to bear him witness, in great ruth,
 To my abode, seeking his heifers there,
 And saying, I must show him where they are,—

* V. 363-86.

Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss !

I know that every Apollonian limb

Is clothed with speed and might and manliness,

As a green bank with flowers ; but unlike him,

I was born yesterday, and you may guess

He well knew this when he indulg'd the whim

Of bullying a poor little new-born thing

That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

Am I like a strong fellow that steals kine ?

Believe me, dearest Father ! (such you are !)

This driving of the herds is none of mine ;

Across my threshold did I wander ne'er,

So may I thrive ! I reverence the divine

Sun and the Gods, and I love you, and care

Even for this hard accuser, who must know

I am as innocent as they or you !

I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals—

(It is, you will allow, an oath of might !)

Through which the multitude of the Immortals

Pass and repass for ever, day and night,

Devising schemes for the affairs of worlds—

That I am guiltless ; and I will requite,

Although my enemy be great and strong,

His cruel threat ! Do thou defend the young !”

Shelley.

Mercury accompanies this speech with divers winkings of the eye and nods of the head to Jupiter to let him know the exact state of the case. The end is, that Jove bursts into a violent fit of laughter to see his roguish child—

εὖ καὶ ἐπισταμένως ἀρνεύμενον ἀμφὶ βόεσσι—

"lying so well and skilfully about the cows," but intimates by a sign to Hermes that he has done enough to establish his reputation, and that it is time he should now really discover the truth. Mercury obeys, leads Apollo to the place where the cows were concealed, and gratifies him with the gift of his lyre. Apollo is transported with delight at the possession of this instrument, and thereupon they swear an eternal friendship. The Hymnist ends his celebration of the God with saying of him in not very pious language, as it should seem—

*παῦρα μὲν οὖν ὀνίνησι, τὸ δ' ἄκριτον ἡπεροπέυει
λύκτα δὲ ὀρφαίην φύλα θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.**

In few things does he help—more oft deceives
Through the dark night the tribes of mortal men.

Hymn to
Venus.

III. But by far the most beautiful of the Homeric Hymns—indeed for its length equal in beauty to any part of the Homeric poems—is the Hymn to Venus. No poet ever surpassed the richness and elegance, the warmth and delicacy, the dignity and tenderness of this exquisite composition. It has always seemed to me to be conceived in an older and more Homeric spirit than any of the other Hymns; and it is remarkable for being founded entirely on the loves of Venus and Anchises, and for containing† a repetition of

* V. 574-5.

† V. 197-9.

the prophecy of the Iliad, that Æneas and his posterity should reign over Troy. It is indeed quite Trojan in its subject and sentiments, and there is one passage* in it by which we learn that the Phrygians spoke a language entirely different from the Trojan, and by which we may infer that the Trojans, as has often been conjectured, were Greeks in speech and blood as they certainly were in religion. Lucretius seems to have borrowed the thought of his famous invocation of Venus from the opening lines of this Hymn. The following passage is by no means the most poetical in the poem, and yet I think few persons can read it without feeling its genuine beauty. Venus reassumes her own proper appearance, and awakes Anchises:—

Ὅρσεο Δαρδανίδη· τί νῦν νήγρετον ὕπνον ἰάνεις;
καὶ φράσαι, εἴ τι ὁμοίη ἐγὼν ἰνδάλλομαι εἶναι,
οἷην δὴ με τὸ πρῶτον ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι νόησας.

ὥς φάθ'· ὁ δ' ἐξ ὕπνοιο μάλ' ἐμπαπέως ὑπάκουσεν·
ὥς δ' εἶδεν δειρὴν τε καὶ ὄμματα κάλ' Ἀφροδίτης,
τάρβησέν τε καὶ ὅσσε παρακλιδὸν ἔτραπεν ἄλλη.
ἄψ δ' αὖτις χλαίνη τε καλύψατο καλὰ πρόσωπα,
καὶ μιν λισσόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
αὐτίκα σ' ὥς ταπρῶτα, θεὰ, ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,
ἔγνω, ὥς θεὸς ἦσθα· σὺ δ' οὐ νημερτὲς ἔειπες.
ἀλλὰ σε πρὸς Ζηνὸς γουνάζομαι Ἀιγιόχοιο,
μή με ζῶντ' ἀμενηνὸν ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἐάσης

* V. 113-4.

ναίειν, ἀλλ' ἐλέαιρ'· ἐπεὶ οὐ βιοθάλμιος ἀνὴρ
γίγνεται, ὅς τε θεαῖς εὐνάζεται ἀθανάτησι.

τὸν δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειτα Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη·
Ἀγχίση, κύδιστε καταθηγῶν ἀνθρώπων,
θάρσει, μηδὲ τι σῆσι μετὰ φρεσὶ δειλίδι λίην.
οὐ γάρ τοί τι δέος, παθέειν κακὸν ἐξ ἐμέθεν γε,
οὐδ' ἄλλων μακάρων· ἐπεὶ φίλος ἐσσί θεοῖσι.
σοὶ δ' ἔσται φίλος νῖός, ὅς ἐν Τρώεσσιν ἀνάξει,
καὶ παῖδες παῖδεσσι διαμπερές ἐκγεγάονται·
τῷ δὲ καὶ Ἀινείας ὄνομ' ἔσσεται, οὐνεκά μ' αἰνὸν
ἔσχεν ἄχος.*—

————— “ Anchises, wake ;
Thy fond repose and lethargy forsake !
Look on the nymph who late from Phrygia came,
Behold me well—say if I seem the same ! ”

At her first call the chains of sleep were broke,
And, starting from his bed, Anchises woke.
But when he Venus view'd without disguise,
Her shining neck beheld and radiant eyes,—
Awed and abash'd, he turn'd his head aside,
Attempting with his robe his face to hide.
Confus'd with wonder, and with fear oppress'd,
In winged words he thus the queen address'd :—

“ When first, O Goddess, I thy form beheld,
Whose charms so far humanity excell'd,
To thy celestial power my vows I paid,
And with humility implor'd thy aid.
But thou, for secret cause to me unknown,
Didst thy divine immortal state disown.
But now, I beg thee by the filial love
Due to thy father, Ægis-bearing Jove,

Compassion on my human state to show,
 Nor let me lead a life infirm below !
 Defend me from the woes which mortals wait,
 Nor let me share of men the common fate !
 Since never man with length of days was blest
 Who in delights of love a deity possess'd."

To him Jove's beauteous daughter thus replied :—
 " Be bold, Anchises ! in my love confide ;
 Nor me, nor other God, thou need'st to fear,
 For thou to all the heavenly host art dear.
 Know, from our loves, thou shalt a son obtain,
 Who over all the realm of Troy shall reign ;
 From whom a race of monarchs shall descend,
 And whose posterity shall know no end ;
 To him thou shalt the name Æneas give,
 As one, for whose conception I must grieve ! "

Congreve.

After telling the story of Tithonus, Venus goes on in a strain of real human affection for Anchises :—

Οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγέ σε τοῖον ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἐλοιμην,
 ἀθάνατόν τ' εἶναι καὶ ζῶειν ἡματα πάντα.
 ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν τοιοῦτος ἐὼν εἰδός τε δέμας τε
 ζώοις, ἡμέτερός τε πόσις κεκλημένος εἴης,
 οὐκ ἂν ἔπειτά μ' ἄχος πυκινὰς φρένας ἀμφικαλύπτει.
 νῦν δέ σε μὲν τάχα γῆρας ὁμοῖον ἀμφικαλύψει,
 νηλεὲς, τό γ' ἔπειτα παρίσταται ἀνθρώποισιν,
 οὐλόμενον, καματηρὸν, δ, τε στυγέουσι θεοὶ περ.*

" On terms like these I never can desire
 Thou should'st to immortality aspire.

* V. 240-7.

Could'st thou, indeed, as now thou art, remain—
 Thy strength, thy beauty, and thy youth retain;
 Could'st thou for ever thus my husband prove,
 I might live happy in thy endless love;
 Nor should I e'er have cause to dread the day
 When I must mourn thy loss and life's decay.
 But thou, alas! too soon and sure must bend
 Beneath the woes which painful age attend;
 Inexorable age! whose wretched state
 All mortals dread, and all immortals hate!"

Congreve.

In no Greek or Latin classical poem, that I remember, is Venus represented with such consummate dignity, tenderness and passion as in this Hymn; and in this particular it certainly differs a good deal from the more popular conception of the Goddess of Love in the *Iliad*. Difficult as the story was to tell, it is told with unbroken decorum, and constitutes a striking example of that intuitive propriety of manner and words, in the display of which the Greek Poets set all others at defiance.

Hymn to
 Ceres.

IV. The manuscript of the Hymn to Ceres, which in some parts is in a very fragmentary state, was discovered in the last century by C. F. Matthæi in the library of the Holy Synod at Moscow, and communicated by him, together with a few lines of a lost Hymn to Bacchus, to David Ruhnken, a Professor at the University of Leyden. Ruhnken published it with critical

notes. There has been much diversity of opinion concerning the genuineness of this poem, or, I should rather say, its identity with the Homeric Hymn to Ceres which certainly existed in the second century, and is often quoted by Pausanias.* The passages so cited by Pausanias differ in a slight degree from lines to be found in this Hymn. The Scholiast to the *Alexipharmica* of Nicander says, that "Ceres laughed at the ludicrous speeches of Iambe, as is related in the Hymns ascribed to Homer." As in the opinion of Ruhnken no such incident is mentioned in this Hymn, as we have it, he concludes the Scholiast to be mistaken, or not to allude to this poem. But, in point of fact, the passage, as it now stands, may very well answer all that the remark of the Scholiast would lead us to expect. Ceres sits for a long time in profound melancholy,

*πρίν γ' ὅτε δὴ χλεύης μιν Ἰάμβη κέδν' εἰδὺῖα
πολλὰ παρασκώπτουσ' ἐτρέψατο πότνια, ἀγνήν,
μειδῆσαι, γελάσαι τὲ, καὶ ἴλαον σχεῖν θυμόν.†*

Till wise Iambe with her jests and gibes
Innumerable, caus'd the holy queen
To smile, to laugh and have a cheerful mind.

Wolfe seems to hold this discovered Hymn very cheap; but he speaks with reference to its claim to absolute genuineness; without allowing which

* Attic. 38. Messen. 38. Corinth. 14.

† V. 202-4.

we may certainly consider it in the same point of view as we do the other Hymns commonly attributed to Homer; and though it is not equal in vigor and beauty to the three principal Hymns before mentioned, it is still a very lively and picturesque poem, smooth and flowing in its language, and curious and peculiar in some of its incidents. It well deserves a scholar's attention.

The story is that Pluto, being enamoured of Proserpine, the daughter of Ceres, carries her off secretly with the connivance, and by the aid, of Jupiter. Ceres wanders over the earth with blazing torches in search of Proserpine. Having learnt from Hecate and the Sun that the maiden had been carried away by Pluto, she forsakes Olympus and assumes the shape of a woman. She goes to Eleusis, and is introduced into the house of Celeus the King, by his daughters, who had come with their pitchers to a fountain to fetch water. Metanira, wife of Celeus, had an infant boy at that time: Ceres undertakes to nurse him; and she, in order to make him immortal, places little Demophoon every night in the midst of the fire, by those means to burn away the corruptible part of his nature. The child throve wonderfully under this caustic treatment. Metanira one night watched the actions of the nurse, and upon seeing her boy placed in the flames, cried out with terror. Ceres snatches him up, and then

declares the spell broken and the process of immortalization frustrated. Meantime Ceres has blasted the earth with sterility, and Jupiter sends repeated messages to induce her to remit her anger and return to Olympus; she however refuses all reconciliation, till Jupiter despatches Mercury to Hades to order Pluto to give up Proserpine. Pluto obeys, but gives her a pomegranate seed* to eat; and the conclusion is that Ceres is pacified upon an understanding that Proserpine is to pass two-thirds of the year with her, and the remaining third only with her husband.†

The Poet says that Pluto seized her—

παίζουσιν κούρησι σὺν Ὀκεανοῦ βαθυκόλποις,
 ἄνθεά τ' αἰνυμένην, ῥόδα, καὶ κρόκον, ἡδ' ἴα καλὰ,
 λειμῶν' ἂν μαλακὸν, καὶ ἀγαλλίδας, ἡδ' ὑάκινθον,
 νάρκισσόν θ', ὃν φύσε δόλον καλυκώπιδι κούρη
 Γαῖα Διὸς βουλῇσι χαρίζομένη Πολυδέκτη,
 θαυμαστὸν γανόωντα, σέβας τότε πᾶσιν ἰδέσθαι
 ἀθανάτοις τε θεοῖς ἡδὲ θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποις·
 τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ ῥίζης ἑκατὸν κᾶρα ἐξεπεφύκει,
 κηῶδει δ' ὁδμῇ πᾶς οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθεν
 γαῖά τε πᾶσ' ἐγέλασσε καὶ ἄλμυρὸν οἶδμα θαλάσσης.
 ἡ δ' ἄρα θαμβήσασ' ὠρέξατο χερσὶν ἅμ' ἅμφω
 καλὸν ἄθυρμα λαβεῖν· χάνε δὲ χθὼν εὐρύναντα
 Νύσιον ἀμπεδίον, τῇ ὄρουσεν ἄναξ Πολυδέγμων
 ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι, Κρόνου πολυνύμμος νιός.

* Ῥοιῆς κόκκον.

† Preface to Hole's Translation of the Hymn to Ceres.

ἄρπάξας δ' ἀέκονσαν ἐπὶ χρυσέοισιν ὄχοισιν
ἦγ' ὀλοφυρομένην, ἰάχησε δ' ἄρ' ὀρθία φωνῇ.*

In Nysia's vale, with nymphs a lovely train,
Sprung from the hoary father of the main,
Fair Proserpine consum'd the fleeting hours
In pleasing sports, and pluck'd the gaudy flowers;
Around them wide the flamy crocus glows,
Through leaves of verdure blooms the opening rose;
The hyacinth declines his fragrant head,
And purple violets deck the enamell'd mead;
The fair narcissus, far above the rest,
By magic form'd, in beauty rose confest.
So Jove, t' ensnare the virgin's thoughtless mind,
And please the Ruler of the Shades design'd.
He caus'd it from the opening earth to rise,
Sweet to the scent, alluring to the eyes.
Never did mortal or celestial power
Behold such vivid tints adorn a flower.
From the deep root a hundred branches sprung,
And to the winds ambrosial odors flung,
Which, lightly wafted on the wings of air,
The gladden'd earth and heaven's wide circuit share;
The joy-dispensing fragrance spreads around,
And ocean's briny swell with smiles is crown'd.

Pleas'd with the sight, nor deeming danger nigh,
The fair beheld it with desiring eye;
Her eager hand she stretch'd to seize the flower,
(Beauteous illusion of th' ethereal power!)
When, dreadful to behold! the rocking ground
Disparted—widely yawn'd a gulf profound!—

* V. 5-20.

Forth rushing from the black abyss arose
 The gloomy monarch of the realm of woes,
 Pluto, from Saturn sprung ;—the trembling maid
 He seiz'd, and to his golden car convey'd ;
 Borne by immortal steeds the chariot flies,
 And thus she pours her supplicating cries.—*Hole.*

When Ceres begins her fictitious account of herself to the daughters of Celeus, she says she comes over sea from Crete :—

νῦν αὖτε Κρήτηθεν ἐπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάσσης
 ἦλυθον.* —

and it is worth remarking that thrice† in the Odyssey, Ulysses, when fabricating a history of his birth and parentage, declares he was born in Crete. This brings the

Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται‡

of Epimenides, quoted by St. Paul, to our recollection, and may induce us to believe that Cretan mendacity was of so ancient a date as to have become a subject of satirical allusion even in the time of Homer.

The change in the person of Ceres, when overlooked by Metanira, and the effects of the manifestation of her divinity, are told in the following fine lines :—

ὥς εἰποῦσα θεὰ, μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ἄμειψε,
 γῆρας ἀπωσαμένη· περί τ' ἀμφί τε κάλλος ἤητο,

* V. 123-4.

† Ξ'. xiv. 199. Ν'. xiii. 256. Τ'. xix. 181.

‡ Titus, c. 1. v. 12.

ὁδμῇ δ' ἱμερόεσσα θνηέντων ἀπὸ πέπλων
 σκίδνατο, τῇλε δὲ φέγγος ἀπὸ χροὸς ἀθανάτοιο
 λάμπε θεῆς, ξανθαὶ δὲ κόμαι κατενήνοθεν ὤμους,
 ἀνγῆς δ' ἐπλήσθη πυκινὸς δόμος, ἀστεροπῆς ὤς.
 βῆ δὲ δι' ἐκ μεγάρων τῆς δ' αὐτίκα γούνατ' ἔλυντο,
 δηρὸν δ' ἄφθογγος γένετο χρόνον, οὐδέ τι παιδὸς
 μνήσατο τηλυγέτοιο ἀπὸ δαπέδου ἀνελέσθαι.*

This said ; the front of age so late assum'd
 Dissolv'd,—her face with charms celestial bloom'd.
 The sacred vesture that around her flew
 Through the wide air ambrosial odors threw ;
 Her lovely form with sudden radiance glow'd,
 Her golden locks in wreaths of splendor flow'd ;
 Through the dark palace stream'd a flood of light,
 As cloud-engender'd fires illumine the night
 With sudden blaze ;—then swiftly from their view,
 Urg'd by indignant rage, the goddess flew.

In Metanira's breast amazement reign'd ;
 Silent she stood ; nor long her knees sustain'd
 Their tottering weight ; she sunk in grief profound.
 The child neglected, shrieking on the ground,
 Beside her lay. Hole.

When Proserpine is about to leave Pluto for the upper world, he gives her, as before mentioned, or rather forces her, to eat a pomegranate seed, *ῥοιῆς κόκκον*, thereby, as Ovid† says, to preclude her from availing herself of his promise that he would restore her to her mother provided she, Proserpine, had eaten nothing in his dominions.

* V. 175-83.

† Metam. V. 8.

In this Hymn we have probably the earliest mention of the Eleusinian mysteries now extant:—

————— ὄργια καλὰ —————

* * * * *

σεμνὰ, τὰ γ' οὐπὼς ἐστὶ παρεξέμεν, οὔτε πυθέσθαι,
οὔτ' ἀχέειν· μέγα γάρ τι θεῶν ἄχος ἰσχάνει αὐδὴν.
ὀλβιος, ὃς τὰδ' ὅπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων·
ὃς δ' ἀτελής, ἱερῶν ὃς τ' ἄμμορος, οὔποθ' ὁμοίων
αἶσαν ἔχει, φθίμενός περ ὑπὸ ζόφῳ εὐρώεντι.*

Those sacred mysteries, for the vulgar ear
Unmeet, and known, most impious to declare!
Oh! let due reverence for the gods restrain
Discourses rash, and check inquiries vain!

Thrice happy he, among the favor'd few,
To whom 'tis giv'n those glorious rites to view!
A fate far different the rejected share;
Unblest, unworthy her protecting care,
They'll perish, and with chains of darkness bound
Be plung'd for ever in the dark profound.—*Hole.*

The following remarks by this rather lax translator deserve notice:—

“ Herodotus, in the second book of his History, relates that the mystic rites of Isis were originally carried from Egypt to Greece by the daughters of Danaus; and that the Pelasgic women were instructed by them in the nature, design and form of their celebration. From the same authority, strengthened by that of Apollodorus, it has been supposed that these mysteries,

* V. 476-82.

disguised under other names and other forms, were afterwards celebrated at Eleusis in honor of Ceres, and obtained the name of Thesmophoria.*

“ If this Hymn should not be supposed to allude to the Egyptian Isis, figured under the character of Ceres, and to Proserpine, as an emblem of the corn† being hidden part of the year beneath the earth,—may not the story on which it is founded be simply this? Pluto, probably King of the Molossians, wages war against the Eleusinians, wastes their country, and carries off their corn: a famine ensues. Jupiter, his brother, ruler over great part of Greece, who had connived at the invasion, thinks proper at length to obtain a peace for them, on their paying to Pluto one third of their tillage by way of tribute. They again cultivate their country, and Rhea, Ceres and Jupiter are reconciled; that is to say, the earth produces corn, and the people are under the protection of their neighbouring king. The conclusion of the story seems evidently allegorical, and intended to convey this plain and excellent moral—‘ That those nations shall prosper who apply diligently to agriculture and the cultivation

* But the Thesmophoria were distinct from the Eleusinian Rites, were celebrated at Athens, and attended by women only.

† So *Persephone* signifies in the Phœnician language, whence *Proserpine* is supposed to be derived. The Phœnician word in sound is *Peri-saphoun*; fructus occultus. Robinson ad Theogon. Hesiod. n. ad v. 773.

of their lands.' Hence Plutus (Riches) was called the Son of Ceres."*

The history and real meaning of the Greek Mysteries form one of the most curious and deeply interesting subjects of inquiry which the philosophic Scholar can propose to himself. The *Belief* of enlightened Paganism rested on them. Varro† said that there were three kinds of Theology: 1. The Mythical or Fabulous, which belonged to the Poets: 2. The Civil or Political, which was founded on the Mythical, and belonged to the Magistrate: 3. The Physical or Natural, which belonged to the Philosopher. This last, the Natural Theology of the Greeks, was secretly preserved in the Mysteries, and it may be conjectured that the *esoteric* or inward doctrine of the Pythagoreans and Platonists was in substance similar to that taught to the Initiated. At least there was a close analogy between them.

I have no intention of losing myself, or of confounding my reader, by any attempt to enter systematically into this, the profoundest subject connected with the history of the Pagan Religion and Philosophy. Neither shall I take notice of the Cabeiric or Samothracian Mysteries (though perhaps the oldest and purest of all); nor of the Telchines, the Dactyli, or the Corybantes. I

* Hole's notes to Hymn to Ceres.

† In August. Civ. Dei, lvi. c. 5.

may find a proper place to speak of these respectively hereafter; at present my wish is to give, if I can, a slight insight into the nature of the far more celebrated Mysteries of Eleusis, the fabulous origin of which is described, and, to the best of my recollection, the earliest allusion to which is made, in this Hymn.

These Mysteries were entirely Egyptian in their origin. They were brought to Peloponnesus by the family of Danaus,* about 1511 B.C. When that part of Greece was invaded and revolutionized by the Dorians, the Mysteries were lost everywhere except amongst the Arcadians. They were not introduced into Attica and established at Eleusis till about a century afterwards, B. C. 1397, in the reign of Erectheus.

The three Mystical Divinities (all the Mysteries involved a sacred Triad) were Demeter or Ceres, Persephone or Proserpine, and Iacchus; the last being altogether distinct from the Theban Bacchus. These Three were the Greek copies of the Egyptian Triad—Isis, Osiris and Horus. The Egyptian story was, that Isis was sister and wife of Osiris, by whom she had a son, Horus; that Typhon was the brother of, and murdered, Osiris and also the youthful Horus; that Isis wandered to Byblus, a city of Phœnicia, in search of the body of her husband, which had been car-

* Her. Euterp. 171.

ried thither in its coffin by the waves. The coffin had rested on a plant called Erica, with which it had become incorporated. The King of the country ordered the wood to be cut, and a pillar in his palace to be made of it. Isis seated herself by a fountain and wept bitterly; she would speak to no one, except the maidens of the Queen Astarte. Her garments exhaled a divine odor. Astarte sent for the stranger, and committed her infant child to her nursing. Isis applied her finger, instead of her breast, to the infant's mouth, and thereby burnt away all the corruptible parts of his body. She then flew, in the form of a swallow, to the pillar of Erica, and uttered a profound groan. Astarte, who had been watching this scene, cried out with surprise. This interruption cost her child his nearly attained immortality. Isis discovered herself, and obtained the pillar in which was concealed the corpse of her husband. She opened it, and took out the coffin, and left the shell of the tree at Byblus, where Plutarch says it still was in his days.* Isis, supposing herself alone, opened the coffin and wept over Osiris. Melicerta, a son of the King, looking at her, was struck dead by a terrible glance from the offended Goddess. The Egyptians paid divine honors to this unfortunate person under the

* Plutarch, Is. et Os. 50.

name of Maneros. Isis ultimately returned to Egypt with the recovered body of her husband.

The murder of Osiris and Horus by Typhon became in Greece the Rape of Proserpine by Pluto, and the destruction of Iacchus by the Titans; the voyage of Isis in search of her husband was the wanderings of Ceres in search of her daughter; the restoration of Horus to life and the recovery of the body of Osiris were the resuscitation of Iacchus and the finding of Proserpine. The details of the stories are so coincident that no one can doubt the identity.

Isis represented mystically the Earth—the Passive or Feminine Principle of Production. Her surname was *Mouth**—Mother, and her own name, Isi,† meant the fertility of the earth. She was Mother-Earth, the literal original of Δημήτηρ, Demeter or Ceres. Herodotus‡ says expressly that they were the same. There was a very ancient temple at Athens dedicated to the Earth, and this was distinct from Ceres; but subsequently these two divinities became completely confounded together,§ and their names indicated the Goddess of Nature, the Queen of all things,

* Is. et Os. 56.

† Jablonsk. Panth. Ægypt. II. p. 32.

‡ Euterp. ubi supra.

§ ————— Δημήτηρ θεὰ,
Γῆ δ' ἐστίν, ὄνομα δ', ὑπέρτερον βούλει, κάλει.

Bacchæ, v. 275-6.

the Giver of Riches, the Mother of all the Plants and of all the Animals.

The introduction of Agriculture necessitates the enactment, and promotes the observance, of some kinds of Laws. Hence Ceres was called Θεσμοφόρος—Legifera, Lawgiver.

Osiris was the Active or Masculine Principle of Production—the husband of Isis. Together they gave birth to Horus, the mystical symbol of the visible or manifested World. He was sur-named *Kaimin*—Visible.* The Greeks altered the Fable a little, but the meaning was the same. Proserpine was the seminal principle, which is carried under the Earth, or, as the Egyptians said, killed. Horus was torn to pieces and Isis restored him to life—an allegory which Plutarch does not dare to explain, but says that it is extremely difficult to penetrate the sense of it. It seems this; that every part of the visible creation is, sooner or later, to be decomposed, and perhaps, as they thought, to be resolved into the Mother Earth. Earth reproduces all things.

Bishop Warburton, who perhaps discovered more ingenuity than sound judgment in his views of the nature of the Greek Mysteries, entertained a general opinion that their ultimate object was to teach to the Initiated a pure Theism, and to

* Is. et Os. 56.

rious relations, and producing and absorbing all things. The Spirits of Men were particles or *sections* of the great Spirit of the Universe, and after the dissolution of the body were re-united to it. Merged in the bosom of the common Nature, they lost all individual existence, and were incapable of reward or punishment. The Bodies of Men were resolved into their constituent and cognate elements of matter, and passed in an infinite revolution into other integral forms. There was no Death in Nature, but Change only. This was the Palingenesia or Resurrection; this was the Metempsychosis or Transition of Souls.

Nature therefore alone was the Divinity of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The Gods of the Popular Religion were of two sorts; first, the personified Forms, Functions and Powers of the Material World, in conjunction with, but always as superior Agents to, some of the Passions and Moral Qualities of Man also personified; and, secondly, deceased heroes, benefactors of Mankind in various ways, as Hercules, Æsculapius, Castor, Pollux, and others;

Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes,
Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo.*

* "There were reckoned above human honors, honors heroical and divine; in the attribution and distribution of which honors, we see, Antiquity made this difference;—that whereas Founders and Uniters of states and cities, Lawgivers, Extirpers of tyrants, Fathers of the

Now the introduction of Agriculture and the consequent reclaiming of men from a savage state were amongst the greatest benefits ever bestowed by Man upon Man: hence many of the Eleusinian rites had reference to the invention of seeds and the exercise of husbandry; and the apotheosis of these primary friends of humanity, and pre-eminently that of Ceres, as the civilizer of mankind, was the principal object of exhibition to the Initiated.*

Hymn to
Bacchus.

But to return to the poems from which I have wandered too long. Amongst the smaller Hymns, that entitled "Bacchus or the Pirates" is particularly worthy of attention. The picturesqueness and vigor of design in this little poem are very remarkable; the language and versification are beautiful. The story is the metamorphosis, by Bacchus, of all but one of a crew of pirates into dolphins or porpoises, and of their vessel into a

people, and other eminent persons in civil merit, were honored but with the titles of Worthies or Demi-gods; such as were Hercules, Theseus, Minos, Romulus, and the like: on the other side, such as were inventors and authors of new arts, endowments, and commodities towards man's life, were ever consecrated amongst the gods themselves; as were Ceres, Bacchus, Mercurius, Apollo, and others." Bacon, Adv. of Learning, B. I.

* *Mystery* is derived from the word *μύειν*, either simply to close the mouth, or to *wink*, or half shut the eyes. *Initiate* is from *initium*, because, according to Cicero, in the Mysteries men received the *beginnings* or principles of a superior knowledge.

vine-tree; and is the original of similar narratives in Ovid,* Propertius,† and Seneca.‡

In the Hymn to Mars is contained a piece of Hymn to Mars. astronomy, something later in date than the Homeric age, and involving a representation at variance with the popular account of the God of War:—

————— πυραυγέα κύκλον ἐλίσσων
αἰθέρος ἐπταπόροις ἐνὶ τείρεσιν, ἔνθα σε πῶλοι
ζαφλεγέες τριτάτης ὑπὲρ ἄντυγος αἰὲν ἔχουσι.§

————— Thou thy fiery circlet roll'st
Mid the sev'n wand'ring stars of heav'n, where thee
Thy flaming steeds on the third chariot's wheel
Bear ever.

The Poet counts from Saturn through Jupiter to Mars. The word *τύραννος*|| also is used in this Hymn, but is not to be found in the Iliad or Odyssey.

In one of the Hymns to Minerva a very spirited Hymn to Minerva. picture is given of the fable of that Goddess springing “all-armed” from the head of Jupiter:—

————— τὴν αὐτὸς ἐγείνατο μητίετα Ζεὺς
σεμνῆς ἐκ κεφαλῆς, πολεμῆϊα τεύχε' ἔχουσαν,
χρύσεα, παμφανόωντα· σέβας δ' ἔχε πάντας ὀρώντας
ἀθανάτους· ἡ δὲ πρόσθεν Διὸς Αἰγίοχοιο
ἔσσυμένως ὤρουσεν ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο καρήνου,
σείσασ' ὄξυν ἄκοντα· μέγας δ' ἐλελίζετ' ὄλυμπος

* Metam. III. 606.

† III. 15. 25.

‡ Œdip. 449. This story also will put the reader in mind of Ariel.

§ V. 6-8.

|| V. 5.

δεινὸν ὑπ' ὀμβρίμης γλαυκώπιδος· ἀμφὶ δὲ γαῖα
 σμερδαλέον ἰάχῃσεν· ἐκινήθη δ' ἄρα πόντος
 κύμασι πορφυρέοισι κυκώμενος.*

————— Her the Counsellor Jove
 In golden arms all shining did beget
 Out of his awful head. Amazement seiz'd
 The gazing deities, what time she burst
 Forth rushing from the Ægis-bearer's front,
 And shook a pointed dart;—the vast Heav'n quak'd
 Dreadful beneath the Azure-ey'd;—the Earth
 Groan'd terribly the while;—the Sea was mov'd
 With all his dark-blue waves.†

Mythology. An acquaintance with the Homeric Hymns is not only to be recommended to all students for the sake of the fine poetry which they contain; but also because they present the original form and coloring of many of the mythological fables of the Greeks, which in the course of succeeding ages underwent great changes in one and the other. An accurate knowledge of the popular Theogony and Theology in their successive variations is indispensable to a masterly view of the poetry of the Greeks; without it, a thousand allusions will escape notice—a thousand passages will be imperfectly or not at all understood. That, in most cases, for the primary purposes of poetry, especially in Homer, the fables are to be

* V. 4-12.

† This passage evidently suggested to Milton the hint for his grand description of Sin breaking forth from the head of Satan.

Par. Lost.

taken literally, cannot be doubted; nevertheless it is equally certain that the main points of the Greek mythology may be most happily explained in a figurative sense, and it is by no means clear that such an allegorical understanding of them is not the original and fundamental one.* Perhaps the importance of this branch of good scholarship has not been sufficiently considered in our great schools in modern times; at least it seems clear from the old editions of the classic poets that it was formerly much more an object of learned study than at present. It is from the Homeric Poems in general that we may best learn the character and bearings of the Popular Religion of the Greeks—that which the old heroic Poets made familiar to the most humble, and with which the almost exclusive devotion, and the splendid achievements of the Arts, associated feelings of fondness and of admiration in the hearts of the noblest, of their countrymen. The Sailor in the Piræus invoked the God; the Philosopher in the

* "I rather think that the Fable was first, and the Exposition devised, than that the Moral was first, and thereupon the Fable framed; but yet that all the Fables and Fictions of the poets were but pleasure, and not figure, I interpose no opinion. Surely of those poets which are now extant, even Homer himself, notwithstanding he was made a kind of scripture by the latter schools of the Grecians, yet I should without any difficulty pronounce, that his fables had no such inwardness *in his own meaning*; but what they might have upon a more original tradition, is not easy to affirm, for he was not the inventor of many of them." Bacon, Adv. of Learning, B. II.

Academy meditated on the Power or Law or Attribute; but both stopped to gaze at, and, gazing, almost equally admired, the Shape in which Phidias or Apelles represented the Sailor's God and the Wise Man's Allegory. But, independently of this not unimportant consideration, there is, as I have said before, so much beautiful and vigorous poetry in these Hymns that no boy, who aspires to be a Scholar, should leave school without having read them through frequently and with attention.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE EPIGRAMS.

UNDER the title of Epigrams are classed a few Epigrams. verses on different subjects, chiefly Addresses to cities or private individuals. There is one short Hymn to Neptune, which seems out of its place here. In the fourth Epigram, Homer is represented as speaking of his blindness and his itinerant life.

*κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ, τὴν μοι θεὸς ὥπασε γεινομένῳ περ,
τλήσομαι, ἀκράαντα φέρων τετληότι θυμῷ·
οὐδὲ τι μοὶ φίλα γυῖα μένειν ἱεραῖς ἐν ἀγυιαῖς
Κύμης ὀρμαίνουσι, μέγας δέ με θυμὸς ἐπείγει
δῆμον ἐς ἀλλοδαπῶν ἵεναι ὀλίγον περ ἔοντα.**

The fate, which God allotted at my birth,
With patient heart will I endure on earth ;
But not in Cyme's sacred streets to dwell,
Idle for ever thus, like I so well,
As, my great Mind still leading me before,
Weak though I be, to seek a foreign shore.

* Epig. IV. v. 13-17.

The Poet addresses also the following thoughtful couplet to Thestorides:—

Θεστορίδῃ, θνητοῖσιν ἀνωίστων πολέων περ,
οὐδὲν ἀφραστότερον πέλεται νοῶς ἀνθρώποισι.*

Many the things obscure, Thestorides,—
But nought obscurer than the Mind of Man!

I reserve some remarks on the very peculiar character of the Greek Epigram till hereafter: it is sufficient at present to say that it is so far from being the same with, or even like to, the Epigram of modern times, that sometimes it is completely the reverse. In general the Songs in Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Waller, and, where he writes with simplicity, in Moore, give a better notion of the Greek Epigrams than any other species of modern composition.

* Epig. VI.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE FRAGMENTS.

THE Fragments, as they are called, consist of a few scattered lines which are said to have been formerly found in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the other supposed works of Homer, and to have been omitted as spurious or dropped by chance from their ostensible context. Besides these, there are some passages from the *Ilias Parva*, or *Little Iliad*, and a string of verses taken from Homer's answers in the old work, called the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, which I have mentioned before. A passage from the *Little Iliad*, to which I have previously alluded, is worth notice, as containing an account of the fortunes of *Æneas* utterly at variance both with the *Iliad*, the *Hymn to Venus* and the *Æneid*, and also as showing the tone and style of these works, which were so popular in former ages, but which have now almost entirely perished. The subject of

History of
Æneas.

the Little Iliad was the continuation of the Trojan war from the death of Hector.

Αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλῆος μεγαθύμον φαίδιμος υἷος
 Ἑκτορέην ἄλοχον κάταγεν κόλπας ἐπὶ νῆας
 παῖδα δ' ἑλὼν ἐκ κόλπου ἐϋπλοκάμοιο τιθήνης,
 ῥίψε, ποδὸς τεταγὼν, ἀπὸ πύργου· τὸν δὲ πεσόντα
 ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταίη·
 ἐκ δ' ἔλετ' Ἀνδρομάχην, ἧῶζωνον παράκοιτιν
 Ἑκτορος· ἦν τέ οἱ αὐτῷ ἀριστῆες παναχαιῶν
 δῶκαν ἔχειν, ἐπὶ ἥρην ἀμειβόμενοι γέρας ἀνδρῶν·
 αὐτόν τ' Ἀγχίσαιος γόνον κλυτὸν ἱπποδάμοιο,
 Αἰνείαν, ἐν νηυσὶν ἐβήσατο ποντοπόροισιν,
 ἐκ πάντων Δαναῶν, ἀγέμεν γέρας ἕξοχον ἄλλων.*

But great Achilles' glorious son led down
 The wife of Hector to the hollow ships ;
 And from the bosom of the fair-haired nurse
 Seiz'd by the foot her child, and from the tower
 Hurl'd headlong to dark death and final fate.
 He out of all chose Hector's bright-zon'd spouse,
 Andromache, whom the assembled chiefs
 Gave to the Hero, valor's meet reward.
 And he Anchises' famous son embark'd
 Captive Æneas in the seaward ship,
 Midst all the Greeks a great selected prize.

There is a very remarkable couplet amongst these Fragments, found indeed in Plato,† but which seems almost Christian in its turn of

* *Fragm. e* Ttetzæ ad Lycophr. 1263.

† *Alcibid. II.*

thought. *That* thought was never expressed with more brevity or energy than thus :—

Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνεύκτοις
ἄμμι δίδον· τὰ δὲ λυγρὰ καὶ εὐχομένων ἀπάλαλκε.

Ask'd and unask'd Thy blessings give, O Lord!
The Evil that we pray for, from us ward!

Half of the following is also found in Hesiod :*—

————— αἰὲ Θεῷ εὐχε' ἄνακτι,
ἦ μὲν ὄτ' ἐννάζῃ, καὶ ὅταν φάος ἱερὸν ἔλθῃ.

————— Pray always to the King divine,
At bed-time and when sacred dawn doth shine.

* Op. et Di. v. 339.



CONCLUSION.

IN parting with Homer, I cannot forbear once more and for the last time earnestly advising such of my readers, as are really desirous of acquiring a pure and healthful taste and a clear and vigorous style, to study the Homeric poems with care and perseverance. It is too generally the case that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, from the comparative facility of their construction, are classed as *School* books only; but in truth they are fit to be the studies of every age and of all men. If there be such a thing as a royal road to a just and manly feeling of what is great and animated in Poetry, it is to be found in a Knowledge of Homer. To be Homeric, is to be natural, lively, rapid, energetic, harmonious; the ancient critics used the epithet as a collective term to express these qualities, however exhibited. They called Sophocles, Homeric—Pindar, Homeric—Sappho, Homeric; because all three have that clearness, picturesqueness and force which the *Iliad* and the

Odyssey contain in perfection. Homer always seems to write in good spirits, and he rarely fails to put his readers in good spirits also. To do this is a prerogative of Genius in all times; but it is especially so of the Genius of primitive or heroic Poetry. In Homer, Head and Heart speak and are spoken to together. Morbid peculiarities of Thought or Temper have no place in him. He is as wide and general as the Air we breathe and the Earth upon which we tread, and his vivacious spirit animates, like a Proteus, a thousand different forms of intellectual production—the life-preserving principle in them all. He is as the mighty strength of his own deep-flowing Ocean—

————— βαθυῤῥείταιο μέγα σθένος Ὀκεανοῖο,
 ἐξ οὔπερ πάντες ποταμοὶ, καὶ πᾶσα θάλασσα,
 καὶ πᾶσαι κρῆναι, καὶ φρεῖατα μακρὰ νάουσιν.*

Whence all the Rivers, all the Seas have birth,
 And every Fountain, every Well on earth.

* Il. φ'. xxi. 195-7.

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